Præterita

VOL. I

By

John Ruskin

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WITH FRONTISPIECE AND
TWO FACSIMILES

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12th to 16th Thousand
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PREFACE.

I HAVE written these sketches of effort and incident in former years for my friends; and for those of the public who have been pleased by my books.

I have written them therefore, frankly, garrulously, and at ease; speaking of what it gives me joy to remember at any length I like—sometimes very carefully of what I think it may be useful for others to know; and passing in total silence things which I have no pleasure in reviewing, and which the reader would find no help in the account of. My described life has thus become more amusing than I expected to myself, as I summoned its long past scenes for present scrutiny:—its main methods of study, and principles of work, I feel justified in commending to other students; and very certainly any habitual readers of my books will understand them

better, for having knowledge as complete as I can give them of the personal character which, without endeavour to conceal, I yet have never taken pains to display, and even, now and then, felt some freakish pleasure in exposing to the chance of misinterpretation.

I write these few prefatory words on my father's birthday, in what was once my nursery in his old house,—to which he brought my mother and me, sixty-two years since, I being then four years old. What would otherwise in the following pages have been little more than an old man's recreation in gathering visionary flowers in fields of youth, has taken, as I wrote, the nobler aspect of a dutiful offering at the grave of parents who trained my childhood to all the good it could attain, and whose memory makes declining life cheerful in the hope of being soon again with them.

HERNE HILL,
10th May, 1885

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[NOTE.—*The Tables of Contents which are now added to this edition of "Prætarita" have been prepared by the compiler of the Index. The dates at the head of each chapter are those with which the chapter mainly deals, although other topics, referring to later years, are often included in the same chapter.*]

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PRÆTERITA.

CHAPTER I.

THE SPRINGS OF WANDEL.

[*The reader must be advised that the first two chapters are reprinted, with slight revision, from Fors Clavigera, having been written there chiefly for the political lessons, which appear now introduced somewhat violently.*]

1. I AM, and my father was before me, a violent Tory of the old school;—Walter Scott's school, that is to say, and Homer's. I name these two out of the numberless great Tory writers, because they were my own two masters. I had Walter Scott's novels and the Iliad, (Pope's translation,) for constant reading when I was a child, on week-days: on Sunday their effect was tempered by Robinson Crusoe and the Pilgrim's Progress; my mother having it deeply in her heart to make an evangelical clergyman of me. Fortunately, I had an aunt more evangelical than my mother; and my aunt gave me

cold mutton for Sunday's dinner, which—as I much preferred it hot—greatly diminished the influence of the Pilgrim's Progress, and the end of the matter was, that I got all the noble imaginative teaching of Defoe and Bunyan; and yet—am not an evangelical clergyman.

2. I had, however, still better teaching than theirs, and that compulsorily, and every day of the week.

Walter Scott and Pope's Homer were reading of my own election, and my mother forced me, by steady daily toil, to learn long chapters of the Bible by heart; as well as to read it every syllable through, aloud, hard names and all, from Genesis to the Apocalypse, about once a year: and to that discipline—patient, accurate, and resolute—I owe, not only a knowledge of the book, which I find occasionally serviceable, but much of my general power of taking pains, and the best part of my taste in literature. From Walter Scott's novels I might easily, as I grew older, have fallen to other people's novels; and Pope might, perhaps, have led me to take Johnson's English, or Gibbon's, as types of language; but, once knowing the 32nd of Deuteronomy, the 119th

Psalm, the 15th of 1st Corinthians, the Sermon on the Mount, and most of the Apocalypse, every syllable by heart, and having always a way of thinking with myself what words meant, it was not possible for me, even in the foolishest times of youth, to write entirely superficial or formal English; and the affectation of trying to write like Hooker and George Herbert was the most innocent I could have fallen into.

3. From my own chosen masters, then, Scott and Homer, I learned the Toryism which my best after-thought has only served to confirm.

That is to say, a most sincere love of kings, and dislike of everybody who attempted to disobey them. Only, both by Homer and Scott, I was taught strange ideas about kings, which I find for the present much obsolete; for, I perceived that both the author of the Iliad and the author of Waverley made their kings, or king-loving persons, do harder work than anybody else. Tydides or Idomeneus always killed twenty Trojans to other people's one, and Redgauntlet speared more salmon than any of the Solway fishermen, and—

which was particularly a subject of admiration to me—I observed that they not only did more, but in proportion to their doings, *got* less than other people—nay, that the best of them were even ready to govern for nothing! and let their followers divide any quantity of spoil or profit. Of late it has seemed to me that the idea of a king has become exactly the contrary of this, and that it has been supposed the duty of superior persons generally to govern less, and get more, than anybody else. So that it was, perhaps, quite as well that in those early days my contemplation of existent kingship was a very distant one.

4. The aunt who gave me cold mutton on Sundays was my father's sister: she lived at Bridge-end, in the town of Perth, and had a garden full of gooseberry-bushes, sloping down to the Tay, with a door opening to the water, which ran past it, clear-brown over the pebbles three or four feet deep; swift-eddying,—an infinite thing for a child to look down into.

5. My father began business as a wine-merchant, with no capital, and a considerable amount of debts bequeathed him by my

grandfather. He accepted the bequest, and paid them all before he began to lay by anything for himself,—for which his best friends called him a fool, and I, without expressing any opinion as to his wisdom, which I knew in such matters to be at least equal to mine, have written on the granite slab over his grave that he was 'an entirely honest merchant.' As days went on he was able to take a house in Hunter Street, Brunswick Square, No. 54, (the windows of it, fortunately for me, commanded a view of a marvellous iron post, out of which the water-carts were filled through beautiful little trap-doors, by pipes like boa-constrictors; and I was never weary of contemplating that mystery, and the delicious dripping consequent); and as years went on, and I came to be four or five years old, he could command a postchaise and pair for two months in the summer, by help of which, with my mother and me, he went the round of his country customers (who liked to see the principal of the house his own traveller); so that, at a jog-trot pace, and through the panoramic opening of the four windows of a post-chaise, made more panoramic still to me

because my seat was a little bracket in front, (for we used to hire the chaise regularly for the two months out of Long Acre, and so could have it bracketed and pocketed as we liked,) I saw all the high-roads, and most of the cross ones, of England and Wales, and great part of lowland Scotland, as far as Perth, where every other year we spent the whole summer; and I used to read the Abbot at Kinross, and the Monastery in Glen Farg, which I confused with 'Glendearg,' and thought that the White Lady had as certainly lived by the streamlet in that glen of the Ochils, as the Queen of Scots in the island of Loch Leven.

6. To my farther great benefit, as I grew older, I thus saw nearly all the noblemen's houses in England; in reverent and healthy delight of uncovetous admiration,—perceiving, as soon as I could perceive any political truth at all, that it was probably much happier to live in a small house, and have Warwick Castle to be astonished at, than to live in Warwick Castle and have nothing to be astonished at; but that, at all events, it would not make Brunswick Square in the least more

pleasantly habitable, to pull Warwick Castle down. And at this day, though I have kind invitations enough to visit America, I could not, even for a couple of months, live in a country so miserable as to possess no castles.

7. Nevertheless, having formed my notion of kinghood chiefly from the FitzJames of the Lady of the Lake, and of noblesse from the Douglas there, and the Douglas in Marmion, a painful wonder soon arose in my child-mind, why the castles should now be always empty. Tantallon was there; but no Archibald of Angus:—Stirling, but no Knight of Snowdoun. The galleries and gardens of England were beautiful to see—but his Lordship and her Ladyship were always in town, said the housekeepers and gardeners. Deep yearning took hold of me for a kind of 'Restoration,' which I began slowly to feel that Charles the Second had not altogether effected, though I always wore a gilded oak-apple very piously in my button-hole on the 29th of May. It seemed to me that Charles the Second's Restoration had been, as compared with the Restoration I wanted, much as that gilded oak-apple to a real apple. And as I grew

wiser, the desire for sweet pippins instead of bitter ones, and Living Kings instead of dead ones, appeared to me rational as well as romantic; and gradually it has become the main purpose of my life to grow pippins, and its chief hope, to see Kings. *

8. I have never been able to trace these prejudices to any royalty of descent: of my father's ancestors I know nothing, nor of my mother's more than that my maternal grandmother was the landlady of the Old King's Head in Market Street, Croydon; and I wish she were alive again, and I could paint her Simone Memmi's King's Head, for a sign.

My maternal grandfather was, as I have said, a sailor, who used to embark, like Robinson Crusoe, at Yarmouth, and come back at rare intervals, making himself very delightful at home. I have an idea he had something to do with the herring business, but am not clear on that point; my mother never being much communicative concerning it. He spoiled her,

* The St. George's Company was founded for the promotion of agricultural instead of town life: and my only hope of prosperity for England, or any other country, in whatever life they lead, is in their discovering and obeying men capable of Kinghood.

and her (younger) sister, with all his heart, when he was at home; unless there appeared any tendency to equivocation, or imaginative statements, on the part of the children, which were always unforgiveable. My mother being once perceived by him to have distinctly told him a lie, he sent the servant out forthwith to buy an entire bundle of new broom twigs to whip her with. 'They did not hurt me so much as one' (twig) 'would have done,' said my mother, 'but I *thought* a good deal of it.'

9. My grandfather was killed at two-and-thirty, by trying to ride, instead of walk, into Croydon; he got his leg crushed by his horse against a wall; and died of the hurt's mortifying. My mother was then seven or eight years old, and, with her sister, was sent to quite a fashionable (for Croydon) day-school, Mrs. Rice's, where my mother was taught evangelical principles, and became the pattern girl and best needlewoman in the school; and where my aunt absolutely refused evangelical principles, and became the plague and pet of it.

10. My mother, being a girl of great power, with not a little pride, grew more and more

exemplary in her entirely conscientious career, much laughed at, though much beloved, by her sister; who had more wit, less pride, and no conscience. At last my mother, formed into a consummate housewife, was sent for to Scotland to take care of my paternal grandfather's house; who was gradually ruining himself; and who at last effectually ruined, and killed, himself. My father came up to London; was a clerk in a merchant's house for nine years, without a holiday; then began business on his own account; paid his father's debts; and married his exemplary Croydon cousin.

11. Meantime my aunt had remained in Croydon, and married a baker. By the time I was four years old, and beginning to recollect things, — my father rapidly taking higher commercial position in London,—there was traceable—though to me, as a child, wholly incomprehensible, — just the least possible shade of shyness on the part of Hunter Street, Brunswick Square, towards Market Street, Croydon. But whenever my father was ill,— and hard work and sorrow had already set their mark on him,—we all went down to Croydon to be petted by my homely aunt;

and walk on Duppas Hill, and on the heather of Addington.

12. My aunt lived in the little house still standing—or which was so four months ago—the fashionablest in Market Street, having actually two windows over the shop, in the second story; but I never troubled myself about that superior part of the mansion, unless my father happened to be making drawings in Indian ink, when I would sit reverently by and watch; my chosen domains being, at all other times, the shop, the bake-house, and the stones round the spring of crystal water at the back door (long since let down into the modern sewer); and my chief companion, my aunt's dog, Towzer, whom she had taken pity on when he was a snappish, starved vagrant; and made a brave and affectionate dog of: which was the kind of thing she did for every living creature that came in her way, all her life long.

13. Contented, by help of these occasional glimpses of the rivers of Paradise, I lived until I was more than four years old in Hunter Street, Brunswick Square, the greater part of the year; for a few weeks in the

summer breathing country air by taking lodgings in small cottages (real cottages, not villas, so-called) either about Hampstead or at Dulwich, at 'Mrs. Ridley's,' the last of a row in a lane which led out into the Dulwich fields on one side, and was itself full of buttercups in spring, and blackberries in autumn. But my chief remaining impressions of those days are attached to Hunter Street. My mother's general principles of first treatment were, to guard me with steady watchfulness from all avoidable pain or danger; and, for the rest, to let me amuse myself as I liked, provided I was neither fretful nor troublesome. But the law was, that I should find my own amusement. No toys of any kind were at first allowed;—and the pity of my Croydon aunt for my monastic poverty in this respect was boundless. On one of my birthdays, thinking to overcome my mother's resolution by splendour of temptation, she bought the most radiant Punch and Judy she could find in all the Soho bazaar—as big as a real Punch and Judy, all dressed in scarlet and gold, and that would dance, tied to the leg of a chair. I must have been greatly

impressed, for I remember well the look of the two figures, as my aunt herself exhibited their virtues. My mother was obliged to accept them; but, afterwards quietly told me it was not right that I should have them; and I never saw them again.

14. Nor did I painfully wish, what I was never permitted for an instant to hope, or even imagine, the possession of such things as one saw in toy-shops. I had a bunch of keys to play with, as long as I was capable only of pleasure in what glittered and jingled; as I grew older, I had a cart, and a ball; and when I was five or six years old, two boxes of well-cut wooden bricks. With these modest, but, I still think, entirely sufficient possessions, and being always summarily whipped if I cried, did not do as I was bid, or tumbled on the stairs, I soon attained serene and secure methods of life and motion; and could pass my days contentedly in tracing the squares and comparing the colours of my carpet;—examining the knots in the wood of the floor, or counting the bricks in the opposite houses; with rapturous intervals of excitement during the filling of the water-cart, through its

leathern pipe, from the dripping iron post at the pavement edge; or the still more admirable proceedings of the turncock, when he turned and turned till a fountain sprang up in the middle of the street. But the carpet, and what patterns I could find in bed covers, dresses, or wall-papers to be examined, were my chief resources, and my attention to the particulars in these was soon so accurate, that when at three and a half I was taken to have my portrait painted by Mr. Northcote, I had not been ten minutes alone with him before I asked him why there were holes in his carpet. The portrait in question represents a very pretty child with yellow hair, dressed in a white frock like a girl, with a broad light-blue sash and blue shoes to match; the feet of the child wholesomely large in proportion to its body; and the shoes still more wholesomely large in proportion to the feet.

15. These articles of my daily dress were all sent to the old painter for perfect realization; but they appear in the picture more remarkable than they were in my nursery, because I am represented as running in a field at the edge of a wood with the trunks

of its trees striped across in the manner of Sir Joshua Reynolds; while two rounded hills, as blue as my shoes, appear in the distance, which were put in by the painter at my own request; for I had already been once, if not twice, taken to Scotland; and my Scottish nurse having always sung to me as we approached the Tweed or Esk,—

'For Scotland, my darling, lies full in thy view,
With her barefooted lassies, and mountains so blue,'

the idea of distant hills was connected in my mind with approach to the extreme felicities of life, in my Scottish aunt's garden of gooseberry bushes, sloping to the Tay. But that, when old Mr. Northcote asked me (little thinking, I fancy, to get any answer so explicit) what I would like to have in the distance of my picture, I should have said 'blue hills' instead of 'gooseberry bushes,' appears to me —and I think without any morbid tendency to think over-much of myself—a fact sufficiently curious, and not without promise, in a child of that age.

16. I think it should be related also that having, as aforesaid, been steadily whipped

if I was troublesome, my formed habits of serenity was greatly pleasing to the old painter; for I sat contentedly motionless, counting the holes in his carpet, or watching him squeeze his paint out of its bladders, —a beautiful operation, indeed, to my thinking;—but I do not remember taking any interest in M Northcote's application of the pigments to the canvas; my ideas of delightful art, in that respect, involving indispensably the possession of a large pot, filled with paint of the brightest green, and of a brush which would come out of it soppy. But my quietude was so pleasing to the old man that he begged my father and mother to let me sit to him for the face of a child which he was painting in a classical subject; where I was accordingly represented as reclining on a leopard skin, and having a thorn taken out of my foot by a wild man of the woods.

17. In all these particulars, I think the treatment, or accidental conditions, of my childhood, entirely right, for a child of my temperament: but the mode of my introduction to literature appears to me questionable, and I am not prepared to carry it out in St.

George's schools, without much modification. I absolutely declined to learn to read by syllables; but would get an entire sentence by heart with great facility, and point with accuracy to every word in the page as I repeated it. As, however, when the words were once displaced, I had no more to say, my mother gave up, for the time, the endeavour to teach me to read, hoping only that I might consent, in process of years, to adopt the popular system of syllabic study. But I went on to amuse myself, in my own way, learnt whole words at a time, as I did patterns; and at five years old was sending for my 'second volumes' to the circulating library.

18. This effort to learn the words in their collective aspect, was assisted by my real admiration of the look of printed type, which I began to copy for my pleasure, as other children draw dogs and horses. The following inscription, facsimiled from the fly-leaf of my Seven Champions of Christendom, (judging from the independent views taken in it of the character of the letter L, and the relative elevation of G,) I

believe to be an extremely early art study of this class; and as by the will of Fors, the first lines of the note, written after an interval of fifty years, underneath my copy of it, in direction to Mr. Burgess, presented some notable points of correspondence with it, I thought it well he should engrave them together, as they stood.

19. My mother had, as she afterwards told me, solemnly 'devoted me to God' before I was born; in imitation of Hannah.

Very good women are remarkably apt to make away with their children prematurely, in this manner: the real meaning of the pious act being, that, as the sons of Zebedee are not (or at least they hope not), to sit on the right and left of Christ, in His kingdom, their own sons may perhaps, they think, in time be advanced to that respectable position in eternal life; especially if they ask Christ very humbly for it every day; and they always forget in the most naïve way that the position is not His to give!

20. 'Devoting me to God,' meant, as far as my mother knew herself what she meant, that she would try to send me to college, and make a clergyman of me: and I was accordingly bred for 'the Church.' My father, who—rest be to his soul—had the exceedingly bad habit of yielding to my mother in large things and taking his own way in little ones, allowed me, without saying a word, to be thus withdrawn from the sherry trade as an unclean thing; not without some pardonable participation in my mother's ultimate views for me. For, many and many a year afterwards, I remember, while he was speaking to one of

our artist friends, who admired Raphael, and greatly regretted my endeavours to interfere with that popular taste,—while my father and he were condoling with each other on my having been impudent enough to think I could tell the public about Turner and Raphael,—instead of contenting myself, as I ought, with explaining the way of their souls' salvation to them—and what an amiable clergyman was lost in me,—'Yes,' said my father, with tears in his eyes—(true and tender tears, as ever father shed,) 'he would have been a Bishop.'

21. Luckily for me, my mother, under these distinct impressions of her own duty, and with such latent hopes of my future eminence, took me very early to church;—where, in spite of my quiet habits, and my mother's golden vinaigrette, always indulged to me there, and there only, with its lid unclasped that I might see the wreathed open pattern above the sponge, I found the bottom of the pew so extremely dull a place to keep quiet in, (my best story-books being also taken away from me in the morning,) that, as I have somewhere said before, the horror of Sunday used even to cast its prescient gloom as far

back in the week as Friday—and all the glory of Monday, with church seven days removed again, was no equivalent for it.

22. Notwithstanding, I arrived at some abstract in my own mind of the Rev. Mr. Howell's sermons; and occasionally, in imitation of him, preached a sermon at home over the red sofa cushions;—this performance being always called for by my mother's dearest friends, as the great accomplishment of my childhood. The sermon was, I believe, some eleven words long; very exemplary, it seems to me, in that respect—and I still think must have been the purest gospel, for I know it began with, 'People, be good.'

23. We seldom had company, even on week days; and I was never allowed to come down to dessert, until much later in life—when I was able to crack nuts neatly. I was then permitted to come down to crack other people's nuts for them—(I hope they liked the ministration)—but never to have any myself; nor anything else of dainty kind, either then or at other times. Once at Hunter Street, I recollect my mother giving me three raisins, in the forenoon, out of the store cabinet; and

I remember perfectly the first time I tasted custard, in our lodgings in Norfolk Street—where we had gone while the house was being painted, or cleaned, or something. My father was dining in the front room, and did not finish his custard; and my mother brought me the bottom of it into the back room.

24. But for the reader's better understanding of such further progress of my poor little life as I may trespass on his patience in describing, it is now needful that I give some account of my father's mercantile position in London.

The firm of which he was head partner may be yet remembered by some of the older city houses, as carrying on their business in a small counting-house on the first floor of narrow premises, in as narrow a thoroughfare of East London,—Billiter Street, the principal traverse from Leadenhall Street into Fenchurch Street.

The names of the three partners were given in full on their brass plate under the counting-house bell,—Ruskin, Telford, and Domecq.

25. Mr. Domecq's name should have been the first, by rights, for my father and Mr. Telford were only his agents. He was the

sole proprietor of the estate which was the main capital of the firm,—the vineyard of Macharnudo, the most precious hillside, for growth of white wine, in the Spanish peninsula. The quality of the Macharnudo vintage essentially fixed the standard of Xeres 'sack,' or 'dry'—secco—sherris, or sherry, from the days of Henry the Fifth to our own; —the unalterable and unrivalled chalk-marl of it putting a strength into the grape which age can only enrich and darken,—never impair.

26. Mr. Peter Domecq was, I believe, Spanish born; and partly French, partly English bred; a man of strictest honour, and kindly disposition; how descended, I do not know; how he became possessor of his vineyard, I do not know; what position he held, when young, in the firm of Gordon, Murphy, and Company, I do not know; but in their house he watched their head clerk, my father, during his nine years of duty, and when the house broke up, asked him to be his own agent in England. My father saw that he could fully trust Mr. Domecq's honour, and feeling;—but not so fully either his sense, or his industry; and insisted, though taking only his agent's

commission, on being both nominally, and practically, the head-partner of the firm.

27. Mr. Domecq lived chiefly in Paris; rarely visiting his Spanish estate, but having perfect knowledge of the proper processes of its cultivation, and authority over its labourers almost like a chief's over his clan. He kept the wines at the highest possible standard; and allowed my father to manage all matters concerning their sale, as he thought best. The second partner, Mr. Henry Telford, brought into the business what capital was necessary for its London branch. The premises in Billiter Street belonged to him; and he had a pleasant country house at Widmore, near Bromley; a quite far-away Kentish village in those days.

He was a perfect type of an English country gentleman of moderate fortune; unmarried, living with three unmarried sisters,—who, in the refinement of their highly educated, unpretending, benevolent, and felicitous lives, remain in my memory more like the figures in a beautiful story than realities. Neither in story, nor in reality, have I ever again heard of, or seen, anything like Mr. Henry

Telford;—so gentle, so humble, so affectionate, so clear in common sense, so fond of horses,—and so entirely incapable of doing, thinking, or saying, anything that had the slightest taint in it of the racecourse or the stable.

28. Yet I believe he never missed any great race; passed the greater part of his life on horseback; and hunted during the whole Leicestershire season; but never made a bet, never had a serious fall, and never hurt a horse. Between him and my father there was absolute confidence, and the utmost friendship that could exist without community of pursuit. My father was greatly proud of Mr. Telford's standing among the country gentlemen; and Mr. Telford was affectionately respectful to my father's steady industry and infallible commercial instinct. Mr. Telford's actual part in the conduct of the business was limited to attendance in the counting-house during two months at Midsummer, when my father took his holiday, and sometimes for a month at the beginning of the year, when he travelled for orders. At these times Mr. Telford rode into London daily from Widmore, signed what letters and

bills needed signature, read the papers, and rode home again; any matters needing deliberation were referred to my father, or awaited his return. All the family at Widmore would have been limitlessly kind to my mother and me, if they had been permitted any opportunity; but my mother always felt, in cultivated society,—and was too proud to feel with patience,—the defects of her own early education; and therefore (which was the true and fatal sign of such defect) never familiarly visited any one whom she did not feel to be, in some sort, her inferior.

Nevertheless, Mr. Telford had a singularly important influence in my education. By, I believe, his sisters' advice, he gave me, as soon as it was published, the illustrated edition of Rogers' Italy. This book was the first means I had of looking carefully at Turner's work: and I might, not without some appearance of reason, attribute to the gift the entire direction of my life's energies. But it is the great error of thoughtless biographers to attribute to the accident which introduces some new phase of character, all the circumstances of character which gave

the accident importance. The essential point to be noted, and accounted for, was that I could understand Turner's work, when I saw it;—not by what chance, or in what year, it was first seen. Poor Mr. Telford, nevertheless, was always held by papa and mamma primarily responsible for my Turner insanities.

29. In a more direct, though less intended way, his help to me was important. For, before my father thought it right to hire a carriage for the above mentioned Midsummer holiday, Mr. Telford always lent us his own travelling chariot.

Now the old English chariot is the most luxurious of travelling carriages, for two persons, or even for two persons and so much of third personage as I possessed at three years old. The one in question was hung high, so that we could see well over stone dykes and average hedges out of it; such elevation being attained by the old-fashioned folding steps, with a lovely padded cushion fitting into the recess of the door,—steps which it was one of my chief travelling delights to see the hostlers fold up

and down; though my delight was painfully alloyed by envious ambition to be allowed to do it myself:—but I never was,—lest I should pinch my fingers.

30. The 'dickey,'—(to think that I should never till this moment have asked myself the derivation of that word, and now be unable to get at it!)—being, typically, that commanding seat in her Majesty's mail, occupied by the Guard; and classical, even in modern literature, as the scene of Mr. Bob Sawyer's arrangements with Sam,—was thrown far back in Mr. Telford's chariot, so as to give perfectly comfortable room for the legs (if one chose to travel outside on fine days), and to afford beneath it spacious area to the boot, a storehouse of rearward miscellaneous luggage. Over which—with all the rest of forward and superficial luggage—my nurse Anne presided, both as guard and packer; unrivalled, she, in the flatness and precision of her in-laying of dresses, as in turning of pancakes; the fine precision, observe, meaning also the easy wit and invention of her art: for, no more in packing a trunk than commanding a campaign, is precision possible without foresight.

1. Among the people whom one must miss out of one's life, dead, or worse than dead, by the time one is past fifty, I can only say for my own part, that the one I practically and truly miss most next to father and mother, (and putting losses of imaginary good out of the question,) is this Anne, my father's nurse, and mine. She was one of our 'many,'* (our many being always but few,) and from her girlhood to her old age, the entire ability of her life was given to serving us. She had a natural gift and speciality for doing disagreeable things; above all, the service of a sick room; so that she was never quite in her glory unless some of us were ill. She had also some parallel speciality for *saying* disagreeable things; and might be relied upon to give the extremely darkest view of any subject, before proceeding to ameliorative action upon it. And she had a very creditable and republican aversion to doing immediately, or in set terms, as she was bid; so that when my mother and she got old together, and my mother became very imperative and particular about having her teacup set on one side of her

* Formerly 'Meinie,' 'attendant company.'

little round table, Anne would observantly and punctiliously put it always on the other; which caused my mother to state to me, every morning after breakfast, gravely, that if ever a woman in this world was possessed by the Devil, Anne was that woman. But in spite of these momentary and petulant aspirations to liberality and independence of character, poor Anne remained very servile in soul all her days; and was altogether occupied, from the age of fifteen to seventy-two, in doing other people's wills instead of her own, and seeking other people's good instead of her own: nor did I ever hear on any occasion of her doing harm to a human being, except by saving two hundred and some odd pounds for her relations; in consequence of which some of them, after her funeral, did not speak to the rest for several months.

32. The dickey then aforesaid, being indispensable for our guard Anne, was made wide enough for two, that my father might go outside also when the scenery and day were fine. The entire equipage was not a light one of its kind; but, the luggage being carefully limited, went gaily behind good horses on the then

perfectly smooth mail roads; and posting, in those days, being universal, so that at the leading inns in every country town, the cry "Horses out!" down the yard, as one drove up, was answered, often instantly, always within five minutes, by the merry trot through the archway of the booted and bright-jacketed rider, with his caparisoned pair,—there was no driver's seat in front: and the four large, admirably fitting and sliding windows, admitting no drop of rain when they were up, and never sticking as they were let down, formed one large moving oriel, out of which one saw the country round, to the full half of the horizon. My own prospect was more extended still, for my seat was the little box containing my clothes, strongly made, with a cushion on one end of it; set upright in front (and well forward), between my father and mother. I was thus not the least in their way, and my horizon of sight the widest possible. When no object of particular interest presented itself, I trotted, keeping time with the postboy on my trunk cushion for a saddle, and whipped my father's legs for horses; at first theoretically only, with dexterous motion

of wrist; but ultimately in a quite practical and efficient manner, my father having presented me with a silver-mounted postillion's whip.

33. The Midsummer holiday, for better enjoyment of which Mr. Telford provided us with these luxuries, began usually on the fifteenth of May, or thereabouts;—my father's birthday was the tenth; on that day I was always allowed to gather the gooseberries for his first gooseberry pie of the year, from the tree between the buttresses on the north wall of the Herne Hill garden; so that we could not leave before that *festa*. The holiday itself consisted in a tour for orders through half the English counties; and a visit (if the counties lay northward) to my aunt in Scotland.

34. The mode of journeying was as fixed as that of our home life. We went from forty to fifty miles a day, starting always early enough in the morning to arrive comfortably to four o'clock dinner. Generally, therefore, getting off at six o'clock, a stage or two were done before breakfast, with

the dew on the grass, and first scent from the hawthorns; if in the course of the midday drive there were any gentleman's house to be seen,—or, better still, a lord's —or, best of all, a duke's,—my father baited the horses, and took my mother and me reverently through the state rooms; always speaking a little under our breath to the housekeeper, major domo, or other authority in charge; and gleaning worshipfully what fragmentary illustrations of the history and domestic ways of the family might fall from their lips.

35. In analyzing above, page 6, the effect on my mind of all this, I have perhaps a little antedated the supposed resultant impression that it was probably happier to live in a small house than a large one. But assuredly, while I never to this day pass a lattice-windowed cottage without wishing to be its cottager, I never yet saw the castle which I envied to its lord; and although in the course of these many worshipful pilgrimages I gathered curiously extensive knowledge, both of art and natural scenery, afterwards infinitely useful, it is evident to

me in retrospect that my own character and affections were little altered by them; and that the personal feeling and native instinct of me had been fastened, irrevocably, long before, to things modest, humble, and pure in peace, under the low red roofs of Croydon, and by the cress-set rivulets in which the sand danced and minnows darted above the Springs of Wandel.

CHAPTER II.

HERNE-HILL ALMOND BLOSSOMS.

36. WHEN I was about four years old my father found himself able to buy the lease of a house on Herne Hill, a rustic eminence four miles south of the 'Standard in Cornhill'; of which the leafy seclusion remains, in all essential points of character, unchanged to this day: certain Gothic splendours, lately indulged in by our wealthier neighbours, being the only serious innovations; and these are so graciously concealed by the fine trees of their grounds, that the passing viator remains unappalled by them; and I can still walk up and down the piece of road between the Fox tavern and the Herne Hill station, imagining myself four years old.

37. Our house was the northernmost of a group which stand accurately on the top or dome of the hill, where the ground is for a small space level, as the snows are, (I

understand,) on the dome of Mont Blanc; presently falling, however, in what may be, in the London clay formation, considered a precipitous slope, to our valley of Chamouni (or of Dulwich) on the east; and with a softer descent into Cold Harbour-lane* on the west: on the south, no less beautifully declining to the dale of the Effra, (doubtless shortened from Effrena, signifying the 'Unbridled' river; recently, I regret to say, bricked over for the convenience of Mr. Biffin, chemist, and others); while on the north, prolonged indeed with slight depression some half mile or so, and receiving, in the parish of Lambeth, the chivalric title of 'Champion Hill,' it plunges down at last to efface itself in the plains of Peckham, and the rural barbarism of Goose Green.

38. The group, of which our house was the quarter, consisted of two precisely similar partner-couples of houses, gardens and all to match; still the two highest blocks of buildings seen from Norwood on the crest

* Said in the History of Croydon to be a name which has long puzzled antiquaries, and nearly always found near Roman military stations.

of the ridge; so that the house itself, three-storied, with garrets above, commanded, in those comparatively smokeless days, a very notable view from its garret windows, of the Norwood hills on one side, and the winter sunrise over them; and of the valley of the Thames on the other, with Windsor telescopically clear in the distance, and Harrow, conspicuous always in fine weather to open vision against the summer sunset. It had front and back garden in sufficient proportion to its size; the front, richly set with old evergreens, and well-grown lilac and laburnum; the back, seventy yards long by twenty wide, renowned over all the hill for its pears and apples, which had been chosen with extreme care by our predecessor, (shame on me to forget the name of a man to whom I owe so much!)—and possessing also a strong old mulberry tree, a tall white-heart cherry tree, a black Kentish one, and an almost unbroken hedge, all round, of alternate gooseberry and currant bush; decked, in due season, (for the ground was wholly beneficent,) with magical splendour of abundant fruit: fresh green, soft amber, and rough-bristled crimson·

bending the spinous branches; clustered pearl and pendant ruby joyfully discoverable under the large leaves that looked like vine.

39. The differences of primal importance which I observed between the nature of this garden, and that of Eden, as I had imagined it, were, that, in this one, *all* the fruit was forbidden; and there were no companionable beasts: in other respects the little domain answered every purpose of Paradise to me; and the climate, in that cycle of our years, allowed me to pass most of my life in it. My mother never gave me more to learn than she knew I could easily get learnt, if I set myself honestly to work, by twelve o'clock. She never allowed anything to disturb me when my task was set; if it was not said rightly by twelve o'clock, I was kept in till I knew it, and in general, even when Latin Grammar came to supplement the Psalms, I was my own master for at least an hour before half-past one dinner, and for the rest of the afternoon.

40. My mother, herself finding her chief personal pleasure in her flowers, was often planting or pruning beside me, at least if I

chose to stay beside *her*. I never thought of doing anything behind her back which I would not have done before her face; and her presence was therefore no restraint to me; but, also, no particular pleasure, for, from having always been left so much alone, I had generally my own little affairs to see after; and, on the whole, by the time I was seven years old, was already getting too independent, mentally, even of my father and mother; and, having nobody else to be dependent upon, began to lead a very small, perky, contented, conceited, Cock-Robinson-Crusoe sort of life, in the central point which it appeared to me, (as it must naturally appear to geometrical animals,) that I occupied in the universe.

41. This was partly the fault of my father's modesty; and partly of his pride. He had so much more confidence in my mother's judgment as to such matters than in his own, that he never ventured even to help, much less to cross her, in the conduct of my education; on the other hand, in the fixed purpose of making an ecclesiastical gentleman of me, with the superfinest of manners, and access to the

highest circles of fleshly and spiritual society, the visits to Croydon, where I entirely loved my aunt, and young baker-cousins, became rarer and more rare: their society of our neighbours on the hill could not be had without breaking up our regular and sweetly selfish manner of living; and on the whole, I had nothing animate to care for, in a childish way, but myself, some nests of ants, which the gardener would never leave undisturbed for me, and a sociable bird or two; though I never had the sense or perseverance to make one really tame. But that was partly because, if ever I managed to bring one to be the least trustful of me, the cats got it.

Under these circumstances, what powers of imagination I possessed, either fastened themselves on inanimate things—the sky, the leaves, and pebbles, observable within the walls of Eden,—or caught at any opportunity of flight into regions of romance, compatible with the objective realities of existence in the nineteenth century, within a mile and a quarter of Camberwell Green.

42. Herein my father, happily, though with no definite intention other than of pleasing

me, when he found he could do so without infringing any of my mother's rules, became my guide. I was particularly fond of watching him shave, and was always allowed to come into his room in the morning (under the one in which I am now writing), to be the motionless witness of that operation. Over his dressing-table hung one of his own water-colour drawings, made under the teaching of the elder Nasmyth; I believe, at the High School of Edinburgh. It was done in the early manner of tinting, which, just about the time when my father was at the High School, Dr. Munro was teaching Turner; namely, in grey under-tints of Prussian blue and British ink, washed with warm colour afterwards on the lights. It represented Conway Castle, with its Frith, and, in the foreground, a cottage, a fisherman, and a boat at the water's edge.*

43. When my father had finished shaving, he always told me a story about this picture. The custom began without any initial purpose of his, in consequence of my troublesome

* This drawing is still over the chimney-piece of my bedroom at Brantwood.

curiosity whether the fisherman lived in the cottage, and where he was going to in the boat. It being settled, for peace' sake, that he *did* live in the cottage, and was going in the boat to fish near the castle, the plot of the drama afterwards gradually thickened; and became, I believe, involved with that of the tragedy of Douglas, and of the Castle Spectre, in both of which pieces my father had performed in private theatricals, before my mother, and a select Edinburgh audience, when he was a boy of sixteen, and she, at grave twenty, a model housekeeper, and very scornful and religiously suspicious of theatricals. But she was never weary of telling me, in later years, how beautiful my father looked in his Highland dress, with the high black feathers.

44. In the afternoons, when my father returned (always punctually) from his business, he dined, at half-past four, in the front parlour, my mother sitting beside him to hear the events of the day, and give counsel and encouragement with respect to the same;—chiefly the last, for my father was apt to be vexed if orders for sherry fell the least short

of their due standard, even for a day or two. I was never present at this time, however, and only avouch what I relate by hearsay and probable conjecture; for between four and six it would have been a grave misdemeanour in me if I so much as approached the parlour door. After that, in summer time, we were all in the garden as long as the day lasted; tea under the white-heart cherry tree; or in winter and rough weather, at six o'clock in the drawing-room,—I having my cup of milk, and slice of bread-and-butter, in a little recess, with a table in front of it, wholly sacred to me; and in which I remained in the evenings as an Idol in a niche, while my mother knitted, and my father read to her,—and to me, so far as I chose to listen.

45. The series of the Waverley novels, then drawing towards its close, was still the chief source of delight in all households caring for literature; and I can no more recollect the time when I did not know them than when I did not know the Bible; but I have still a vivid remembrance of my father's intense expression of sorrow mixed with scorn, as he threw

down Count Robert of Paris, after reading three or four pages; and knew that the life of Scott was ended: the scorn being a very complex and bitter feeling in him,—partly, indeed, of the book itself, but chiefly of the wretches who were tormenting and selling the wrecked intellect, and not a little, deep down, of the subtle dishonesty which had essentially caused the ruin. My father never could forgive Scott his concealment of the Ballantyne partnership.

46. Such being the salutary pleasures of Herne Hill, I have next with deeper gratitude to chronicle what I owe to my mother for the resolutely consistent lessons which so exercised me in the Scriptures as to make every word of them familiar to my ear in habitual music,—yet in that familiarity reverenced, as transcending all thought, and ordaining all conduct.*

This she effected, not by her own sayings or personal authority; but simply by compelling me to read the book thoroughly, for myself. As soon as I was able to read with

* Compare the 52nd paragraph of chapter iii. of *The Bible of Amiens.*

fluency, she began a course of Bible work with me, which never ceased till I went to Oxford. She read alternate verses with me, watching, at first, every intonation of my voice, and correcting the false ones, till she made me understand the verse, if within my reach, rightly, and energetically. It might be, beyond me altogether; that she did not care about; but she made sure that as soon as I got hold of it at all, I should get hold of it by the right end.

In this way she began with the first verse of Genesis, and went straight through, to the last verse of the Apocalypse; hard names, numbers, Levitical law, and all; and began again at Genesis the next day. If a name was hard, the better the exercise in pronunciation,—if a chapter was tiresome, the better lesson in patience,—if loathsome, the better lesson in faith that there was some use in its being so outspoken. After our chapters, (from two to three a day, according to their length, the first thing after breakfast, and no interruption from servants allowed,—none from visitors, who either joined in the reading or had to stay

upstairs,—and none from any visitings or excursions, except real travelling,) I had to learn a few verses by heart, or repeat, to make sure I had not lost, something of what was already known; and, with the chapters thus gradually possessed from the first word to the last, I had to learn the whole body of the fine old Scottish paraphrases, which are good, melodious, and forceful verse; and to which, together with the Bible itself, I owe the first cultivation of my ear in sound.

It is strange that of all the pieces of the Bible which my mother thus taught me, that which cost me most to learn, and which was, to my child's mind, chiefly repulsive—the 119th Psalm—has now become of all the most precious to me, in its overflowing and glorious passion of love for the Law of God, in opposition to the abuse of it by modern preachers of what they imagine to be His gospel.

47. But it is only by deliberate effort that I recall the long morning hours of toil, as regular as sunrise,—toil on both sides equal—by which, year after year, my mother forced

me to learn these paraphrases, and chapters, (the eighth of 1st Kings being one—try it, good reader, in a leisure hour!) allowing not so much as a syllable to be missed or misplaced; while every sentence was required to be said over and over again till she was satisfied with the accent of it. I recollect a struggle between us of about three weeks, concerning the accent of the 'of' in the lines

> 'Shall any following spring revive
> The ashes of the urn?' -

I insisting, partly in childish obstinacy, and partly in true instinct for rhythm, (being wholly careless on the subject both of urns and their contents,) on reciting it with an accented *of*. It was not, I say, till after three weeks' labour, that my mother got the accent lightened on the 'of' and laid on the ashes, to her mind. But had it taken three years she would have done it, having once undertaken to do it. And, assuredly, had she not done it,—well, there's no knowing what would have happened; but I'm very thankful she *did*.

48. I have just opened my oldest (in use)

Bible,—a small, closely, and very neatly printed volume it is, printed in Edinburgh by Sir D. Hunter Blair and J. Bruce, Printers to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, in 1816. Yellow, now, with age, and flexible, but not unclean, with much use, except that the lower corners of the pages at 8th of 1st Kings, and 32nd Deuteronomy, are worn somewhat thin and dark, the learning of these two chapters having cost me much pains. My mother's list of the chapters with which, thus learned, she established my soul in life,* has just fallen out of it. I will take what indulgence the incurious reader can give me, for printing the list thus accidentally occurrent:—

Exodus,	chapters	15th and 20th.
2 Samuel	„	1st, from 17th verse to the end.
1 Kings	„	8th

* This expression in Fors has naturally been supposed by some readers to mean that my mother at this time made me vitally and evangelically religious. The fact was far otherwise. I meant only that she gave me secure *ground* for all future life, practical or spiritual. See the paragraph next following.

Psalms	chapters	23rd, 32nd, 90th, 91st, 103rd, 112th, 119th, 139th.
Proverbs	,,	2nd, 3rd, 8th, 12th.
Isaiah	,,	58th.
Matthew	,,	5th, 6th, 7th.
Acts	,,	26th.
1 Corinthians	,,	13th, 15th.
James	,,	4th.
Revelation	,,	5th, 6th.

And truly, though I have picked up the elements of a little further knowledge—in mathematics, meteorology, and the like, in after life,—and owe not a little to the teaching of many people, this maternal installation of my mind in that property of chapters, I count very confidently the most precious, and, on the whole, the one *essential* part of all my education.

And it is perhaps already time to mark what advantage and mischief, by the chances of life up to seven years old, had been irrevocably determined for me.

I will first count my blessings (as a not unwise friend once recommended me to do,

continually; whereas I have a bad trick of always numbering the thorns in my fingers and not the bones in them).

And for best and truest beginning of all blessings, I had been taught the perfect meaning of Peace, in thought, act, and word.

I never had heard my father's or mother's voice once raised in any question with each other; nor seen an angry, or even slightly hurt or offended, glance in the eyes of either. I had never heard a servant scolded; nor even suddenly, passionately, or in any severe manner, blamed. I had never seen a moment's trouble or disorder in any household matter; nor anything whatever either done in a hurry, or undone in due time. I had no conception of such a feeling as anxiety; my father's occasional vexation in the afternoons, when he had only got an order for twelve butts after expecting one for fifteen, as I have just stated, was never manifested to me; and itself related only to the question whether his name would be a step higher or lower in the year's list of sherry exporters; for he never spent more than half his income, and

therefore found himself little incommoded by occasional variations in the total of it. I had never done any wrong that I knew of—beyond occasionally delaying the commitment to heart of some improving sentence, that I might watch a wasp on the window pane, or a bird in the cherry tree; and I had never seen any grief.

49. Next to this quite priceless gift of Peace, I had received the perfect understanding of the natures of Obedience and Faith. I obeyed word, or lifted finger, of father or mother, simply as a ship her helm; not only without idea of resistance, but receiving the direction as a part of my own life and force, a helpful law, as necessary to me in every moral action as the law of gravity in leaping. And my practice in Faith was soon complete: nothing was ever promised me that was not given; nothing ever threatened me that was not inflicted, and nothing ever told me that was not true.

Peace, obedience, faith; these three for chief good; next to these, the habit of fixed attention with both eyes and mind—on which I will not further enlarge at this moment,

this being the main practical faculty of my life, causing Mazzini to say of me, in conversation authentically reported, a year or two before his death, that I had 'the most analytic mind in Europe.' An opinion in which, so far as I am acquainted with Europe, I am myself entirely disposed to concur.

Lastly, an extreme perfection in palate and all other bodily senses, given by the utter prohibition of cake, wine, comfits, or, except in carefullest restriction, fruit; and by fine preparation of what food was given me. Such I esteem the main blessings of my childhood;—next, let me count the equally dominant calamities.

50. First, that I had nothing to love.

My parents were—in a sort—visible powers of nature to me, no more loved than the sun and the moon: only I should have been annoyed and puzzled if either of them had gone out; (how much, now, when both are darkened!)—still less did I love God; not that I had any quarrel with Him, or fear of Him; but simply found what people told me was His service, disagreeable; and what people told me was His book, not

entertaining. I had no companions to quarrel with, neither; nobody to assist, and nobody to thank. Not a servant was ever allowed to do anything for me, but what it was their duty to do; and why should I have been grateful to the cook for cooking, or the gardener for gardening,—when the one dared not give me a baked potato without asking leave, and the other would not let my ants' nests alone, because they made the walks untidy? The evil consequence of all this was not, however, what might perhaps have been expected, that I grew up selfish or unaffectionate; but that, when affection did come, it came with violence utterly rampant and unmanageable, at least by me, who never before had anything to manage.

51. For (second of chief calamities) I had nothing to endure. Danger or pain of any kind I knew not: my strength was never exercised, my patience never tried, and my courage never fortified. Not that I was ever afraid of anything,—either ghosts, thunder, or beasts; and one of the nearest approaches to insubordination which I was ever tempted into as a child, was in passionate effort to

get leave to play with the lion's cubs in Wombwell's menagerie.

52. Thirdly. I was taught no precision nor etiquette of manners; it was enough if, in the little society we saw, I remained unobtrusive, and replied to a question without shyness: but the shyness came later, and increased as I grew conscious of the rudeness arising from the want of social discipline, and found it impossible to acquire, in advanced life, dexterity in any bodily exercise, skill in any pleasing accomplishment, or ease and tact in ordinary behaviour.

53. Lastly, and chief of evils. My judgment of right and wrong, and powers of independent action,* were left entirely undeveloped; because the bridle and blinkers were never taken off me. Children should have their times of being off duty, like soldiers; and when once the obedience, if required, is certain, the little creature should be very early put for periods of practice in complete command of itself; set on the bare-backed horse of its own will, and left to break

* *Action*, observe, I say here: in *thought* I was too independent, as I said above.

it by its own strength. But the ceaseless authority exercised over my youth left me, when cast out at last into the world, unable for some time to do more than drift with its vortices.

54. My present verdict, therefore, on the general tenor of my education at that time, must be, that it was at once too formal and too luxurious; leaving my character, at the most important moment for its construction, cramped indeed, but not disciplined; and only by protection innocent, instead of by practice virtuous. My mother saw this herself, and but too clearly, in later years; and whenever I did anything wrong, stupid, or hard-hearted, —(and I have done many things that were all three,)—always said, 'It is because you were too much indulged.'

55. Thus far, with some omissions, I have merely reprinted the account of these times given in Fors: and I fear the sequel may be more trivial, because much is concentrated in the foregoing broad statement, which I have now to continue by slower steps:—and yet less amusing, because I tried always in Fors to say things, if I could, a little piquantly;

and the rest of the things related in this book will be told as plainly as I can. But whether I succeeded in writing piquantly in Fors or not, I certainly wrote often obscurely; and the description above given of Herne Hill seems to me to need at once some reduction to plainer terms.

56. The actual height of the long ridge of Herne Hill, above Thames,—at least above the nearly Thames-level of its base at Camberwell Green, is, I conceive, not more than one hundred and fifty feet: but it gives the whole of this fall on both sides of it in about a quarter of a mile; forming, east and west, a succession of quite beautiful pleasure-ground and gardens, instantly dry after rain, and in which, for children, running down is pleasant play, and rolling a roller up, vigorous work. The view from the ridge on both sides was, before railroads came, entirely lovely: westward at evening, almost sublime, over softly wreathing distances of domestic wood; —Thames herself not visible, nor any fields except immediately beneath; but the tops of twenty square miles of politely inhabited groves. On the other side, east and south,

the Norwood hills, partly rough with furze, partly wooded with birch and oak, partly in pure green bramble copse, and rather steep pasture, rose with the promise of all the rustic loveliness of Surrey and Kent in them, and with so much of space and height in their sweep, as gave them some fellowship with hills of true hill-districts. Fellowship now inconceivable, for the Crystal Palace, without ever itself attaining any true aspect of size, and possessing no more sublimity than a cucumber frame between two chimneys, yet by its stupidity of hollow bulk, dwarfs the hills at once; so that now one thinks of them no more but as three long lumps of clay, on lease for building. But then, the Nor-wood, or North wood, so called as it was seen from Croydon, in opposition to the South wood of the Surrey downs, drew itself in sweeping crescent good five miles round Dulwich to the south, broken by lanes of ascent, Gipsy Hill, and others; and, from the top, commanding views towards Dartford, and over the plain of Croydon,—in contemplation of which I one day frightened my mother out of her wits by saying 'the eyes were coming out of my

head!' She thought it was an attack of coup-de-soleil.

57. Central in such amphitheatre, the crowning glory of Herne Hill was accordingly, that, after walking along its ridge southward from London through a mile of chestnut, lilac, and apple trees, hanging over the wooden palings on each side—suddenly the trees stopped on the left, and out one came on the top of a field sloping down to the south into Dulwich valley—open field animate with cow and buttercup, and below, the beautiful meadows and high avenues of Dulwich; and beyond, all that crescent of the Norwood hills; a footpath, entered by a turnstile, going down to the left, always so warm that invalids could be sheltered there in March, when to walk elsewhere would have been death to them; and so quiet, that whenever I had anything difficult to compose or think of, I used to do it rather there than in our own garden. The great field was separated from the path and road only by light wooden open palings, four feet high, needful to keep the cows in. Since I last composed, or meditated there, various improvements have taken place; first

the neighbourhood wanted a new church, and built a meagre Gothic one with a useless spire, for the fashion of the thing, at the side of the field; then they built a parsonage behind it, the two stopping out half the view in that direction. Then the Crystal Palace came, for ever spoiling the view through all its compass, and bringing every show-day, from London, a flood of pedestrians down the footpath, who left it filthy with cigar ashes for the rest of the week: then the railroads came, and expatiating roughs by every excursion train, who knocked the palings about, roared at the cows, and tore down what branches of blossom they could reach over the palings on the enclosed side. Then the residents on the enclosed side built a brick wall to defend themselves. Then the path got to be insufferably hot as well as dirty, and was gradually abandoned to the roughs, with a policeman on watch at the bottom. Finally, this year, a six foot high close paling has been put down the other side of it, and the processional excursionist has the liberty of obtaining what notion of the country air and prospect he may, between the wall and that, with one bad

cigar before him, another behind him, and another in his mouth.

58. I do not mean this book to be in any avoidable way disagreeable or querulous; but expressive generally of my native disposition —which, though I say it, is extremely amiable, when I'm not bothered: I will grumble elsewhere when I must, and only notice this injury alike to the resident and excursionist at Herne Hill, because questions of right-of-way are now of constant occurrence; and in most cases, the mere *path* is the smallest part of the old Right, truly understood The Right is of the cheerful view and sweet air which the path commanded.

Also, I may note in passing, that for all their talk about Magna Charta, very few Englishmen are aware that one of the main provisions of it is that Law should not be sold;* and it seems to me that the law of England might preserve Banstead and other downs free to the poor of England, without charging me, as it has just done, a hundred pounds for its temporary

* "To no one will We sell, to no one will We deny or defer, Right, or Justice."

performance of that otherwise unremunerative duty.

59. I shall have to return over the ground of these early years, to fill gaps, after getting on a little first; but will yet venture here the tediousness of explaining that my saying "in Herne Hill garden all fruit was forbidden," only meant, of course, forbidden unless under defined restriction; which made the various gatherings of each kind in its season a sort of harvest festival; and which had this further good in its apparent severity, that, although in the at last indulgent areas, the peach which my mother gathered for me when she was sure it was ripe, and the cherry pie for which I had chosen the cherries red all round, were, I suppose, of more ethereal flavour to me than they could have been to children allowed to pluck and eat at their will; still the unalloyed and long continuing pleasure given me by our fruit-tree avenue was in its blossom, not in its bearing. For the general epicurean enjoyment of existence, potatoes well browned, green pease well boiled,—broad beans of the true bitter,—and the pots of damson and currant for whose annual filling we were

dependent more on the greengrocer than the garden, were a hundredfold more important to me than the dozen or two of nectarines of which perhaps I might get the halves of three, —(the other sides mouldy)—or the bushel or two of pears which went directly to the store-shelf. So that, very early indeed in my thoughts of trees, I had got at the principle given fifty years afterwards in "Proserpina," that the seeds and fruits of them were for the sake of the flowers, not the flowers for the fruit. The first joy of the year being in its snowdrops, the second, and cardinal one, was in the almond blossom,—every other garden and woodland gladness following from that in an unbroken order of kindling flower and shadowy leaf; and for many and many a year to come,—until indeed, the whole of life became autumn to me,—my chief prayer for the kindness of heaven, in its flowerful seasons, was that the frost might not touch the almond blossom.

CHAPTER III.

THE BANKS OF TAY.

60. THE reader has, I hope, observed that in all I have hitherto said, emphasis has been laid only on the favourable conditions which surrounded the child whose history I am writing, and on the docile and impressionable quietness of its temper.

No claim has been made for it to any special power or capacity; for, indeed, none such existed, except that patience in looking, and precision in feeling, which afterwards, with due industry, formed my analytic power.

In all essential qualities of genius, except these, I was deficient; my memory only of average power. I have literally never known a child so incapable of acting a part, or telling a tale. On the other hand, I have never known one whose thirst for visible fact was at once so eager and so methodic.

61. I find also that in the foregoing accounts,

modest as I meant them to be, higher literature is too boastfully spoken of as my first and exclusive study. My little Pope's Iliad, and, in any understanding of them, my Genesis and Exodus, were certainly of little account with me till after I was ten. My calf milk of books was, on the lighter side, composed of Dame Wiggins of Lee, the Peacock at Home, and the like nursery rhymes; and on the graver side, of Miss Edgeworth's Frank, and Harry and Lucy, combined with Joyce's Scientific Dialogues. The earliest dated efforts I can find, indicating incipient motion of brain-molecules, are six 'poems' on subjects selected from those works; between the fourth and fifth of which my mother has written: "January, 1826. This book begun about September or October, 1826, finished about January, 1827." The whole of it, therefore, was written and printed in imitation of book-print, in my seventh year. The book is a little red one, ruled with blue, six inches high by four wide, containing forty-five leaves pencilled in imitation of print on both sides,—the title-page, written in the form here approximately imitated, on the inside of the cover.

HARRY AND LUCY

CONCLUDED

BEING THE LAST

PART OF

EARLY LESSONS

in four volumes

vol I

with copper

plates

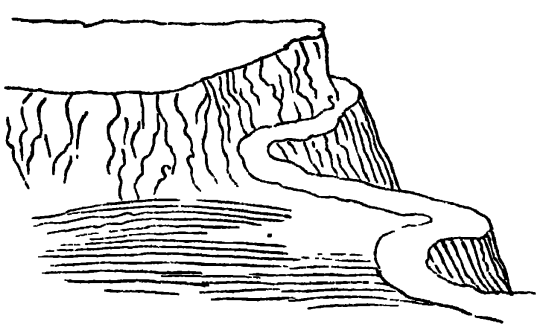
PRINTED and composed by a little boy

and also drawn

62. Of the promised four volumes, it appears that (according to my practice to this day) I accomplished but one and a quarter, the first volume consisting only of forty leaves, the rest of the book being occupied by the aforesaid six 'poems,' and the forty leaves losing ten of their pages in the 'copper plates,' of which the one, purporting to represent 'Harry's new road,' is, I believe, my first effort at mountain drawing. The passage closing the first volume of this work is, I think, for several reasons, worth preservation. I print it, therefore, with its own divisions of line, and three variations of size in imitated type. Punctuation must be left to the reader's kind conjecture. The hyphens, it is to be noticed, were put long or short, to make the print even, not that it ever succeeds in being so, but the variously spaced lines here imitate it pretty well.

Harry knew very well-
what it was and went
on with his drawing but

Lucy soon called him away and bid him observe a great black cloud from the north which seemed rather electrical. Harry ran



for an electrical apparatus which his father had given him and the cloud electrified his apparatus positively after that another cloud came which electrified his apparatus negatively

and then a long train of smaller ones but before this cloud came a great cloud of dust rose from the ground and followed the positive cloud and at length seemed to come in contact with it and when the other cloud came a flash of lightning was seen to dart through the cloud of dust upon which the negative cloud spread very much and dissolved in rain which presently cleared the sky. After this phenomenon was over and also the surprise Harry began to wonder how electricity could get where there was so much water but he soon observed a rainbow and a-rising mist under it which

his fancy soon transformed into a female form. He then remembered the witch of the waters at the Alps who was raised from them by-takeing some water in the-hand and throwing it into the air pronouncing some unintelligable words. And though it was a tale it-affected Harry now when he saw in the clouds some-

end of Harry thing

and Lucy like it.

63. The several reasons aforesaid, which induce me to reprint this piece of, too literally, 'composition,' are—the first, that it is a tolerable specimen of my seven years old spelling; —tolerable only, not *fair*, since it was extremely unusual with me to make a mistake at all, whereas here there are two (taking

and unintelligable), which I can only account for by supposing I was in too great a hurry to finish my volume;—the second, that the adaptation of materials for my story out of Joyce's Scientific Dialogues * and Manfred, is an extremely perfect type of the interwoven temper of my mind, at the beginning of days just as much as at their end—which has always made foolish scientific readers doubt my books because there was love of beauty in them, and foolish æsthetic readers doubt

* The original passage is as follows, vol. vi., edition of 1821, p. 138:—

"Dr. Franklin mentions a remarkable appearance which occurred to Mr. Wilke, a considerable electrician. On the 20th of July, 1758, at three o'clock in the afternoon, he observed a great quantity of dust rising from the ground, and covering a field, and part of the town in which he then was. There was no wind, and the dust moved gently towards the east, where there appeared a great black cloud, which electrified his apparatus positively to a very high degree. This cloud went towards the west, the dust followed it, and continued to rise higher and higher, till it composed a thick pillar, in the form of a sugar-loaf, and at length it seemed to be in contact with the cloud. At some distance from this, there came another great cloud, with a long stream of smaller ones, which electrified his apparatus negatively; and when they came near the positive cloud, a flash of lightning was seen to dart through the cloud of dust, upon which the negative clouds spread very much, and dissolved in rain, which presently cleared the atmosphere."

my books because there was love of science in them;—the third, that the extremely reasonable method of final judgment, upon which I found my claim to the sensible reader's respect for these dipartite writings, cannot be better illustrated than by this proof, that, even at seven years old, no tale, however seductive, could "affect" Harry, until he had seen—in the clouds, or elsewhere—"something like it."

Of the six poems which follow, the first is on the Steam-engine, beginning,

> "When furious up from mines the water pours,
> And clears from rusty moisture all the ores;"

and the last on the Rainbow, "in blank verse," as being of a didactic character, with observations on the ignorant and unreflective dispositions of certain people.

> "But those that do not know about that light,
> Reflect not on it; and in all that light,
> Not one of all the colours do they know."

64. It was only, I think, after my seventh year had been fulfilled in these meditations, that my mother added the Latin lesson to the Bible-reading, and accurately established the daily routine which was sketched in the

foregoing chapter. But it extremely surprises me, in trying, at least for my own amusement, if not the reader's, to finish the sketch into its corners, that I can't recollect now what used to happen first in the morning, except breakfasting in the nursery, and if my Croydon cousin Bridget happened to be staying with us, quarrelling with her which should have the brownest bits of toast. That must have been later on, though, for I could not have been promoted to toast at the time I am thinking of. Nothing is well clear to me of the day's course, till, after my father had gone to the City by the coach, and my mother's household orders been quickly given, lessons began at half-past nine, with the Bible readings above described, and the two or three verses to be learned by heart, with a verse of paraphrase;—then a Latin declension or a bit of verb, and eight words of vocabulary from Adam's Latin Grammar, (the best that ever was,) and the rest of the day was my own. Arithmetic was wholesomely remitted till much later; geography I taught myself fast enough in my own way; history was never thought of, beyond what I chose to read of Scott's

Tales of a Grandfather. Thus, as aforesaid, by noon I was in the garden on fine days, or left to my own amusements on wet ones; of which I have further at once to note that nearly as soon as I could crawl, my toy-bricks of lignum vitæ had been constant companions: and I am graceless in forgetting by what extravagant friend, (I greatly suspect my Croydon aunt,) I was afterwards gifted with a two-arched bridge, admirable in fittings of voussoir and keystone, and adjustment of the level courses of masonry with bevelled edges, into which they dovetailed, in the style of Waterloo Bridge. Well-made centrcings, and a course of inlaid steps down to the water, made this model largely, as accurately, instructive: and I was never weary of building, *un*building,—(it was too strong to be thrown down, but had always to be *taken* down,)—and rebuilding it. This inconceivable passive—or rather impassive—contentment in doing, or reading, the same thing over and over again, I perceive to have been a great condition in my future power of getting thoroughly to the bottom of matters.

65. Some people would say that in getting these toys lay the chance that guided me to

an early love of architecture; but I never saw or heard of another child so fond of its toy bricks, except Miss Edgeworth's Frank. To be sure, in this present age, — age of universal brickfield though it be, — people don't give their children toy bricks, but toy puff-puffs; and the little things are always taking tickets and arriving at stations, without ever fathoming—none of them will take pains enough to do *that*,—the principle of a puff-puff! And what good could they get of it if they did,—unless they could learn also, that no principle of Puff-puff would ever supersede the principle of Breath?

But I not only mastered, with Harry and Lucy, the entire motive principle of puff-puff; but also, by help of my well-cut bricks, very utterly the laws of practical stability in towers and arches, by the time I was seven or eight years old: and these studies of structure were farther animated by my invariable habit of watching, with the closest attention, the proceedings of any bricklayers, stone-sawyers, or paviours,—whose work my nurse would allow me to stop to contemplate in our walks; or, delight of delights, might be seen at ease

from some fortunate window of inn or lodging on our journeys. In those cases the day was not long enough for my rapturous and riveted observation.

66. Constantly, as aforesaid, in the garden when the weather was fine, my time there was passed chiefly in the same kind of close watching of the ways of plants. I had not the smallest taste for growing them, or taking care of them, any more than for taking care of the birds, or the trees, or the sky, or the sea. My whole time passed in staring at them, or into them. In no morbid curiosity, but in admiring wonder, I pulled every flower to pieces till I knew all that could be seen of it with a child's eyes; and used to lay up little treasures of seeds, by way of pearls and beads,—never with any thought of sowing them. The old gardener only came once a week, for what sweeping and weeding needed doing; I was fain to learn to sweep the walks with him, but was discouraged and shamed by his always doing the bits I had done over again. I was extremely fond of digging holes, but that form of gardening was not allowed. Necessarily, I fell always back into my merely

contemplative mind, and at nine years old began a poem, called Eudosia, — I forget wholly where I got hold of this name, or what I understood by it,—'On the Universe,' though I could understand not a little by it, now. A couplet or two, as the real beginning at once of Deucalion and Proserpina, may be perhaps allowed, together with the preceding, a place in this grave memoir; the rather that I am again enabled to give accurate date—September 28th, 1828—for the beginning of its 'First book,' as follows:—

'When first the wrath of heaven o'erwhelmed the world,
And o'er the rocks, and hills, and mountains, hurl'd
The waters' gathering mass; and sea o'er shore,—
Then mountains fell, and vales, unknown before,
Lay where they were. Far different was the Earth
When first the flood came down, than at its second birth.
Now for its produce'—Queen of flowers, O rose,
From whose fair coloured leaves such odour flows,
Thou must now be before thy subjects named,
Both for thy beauty and thy sweetness famed.
Thou art the flower of England, and the flow'r
Of Beauty too—of Venus' odrous bower.
And thou wilt often shed sweet odours round,
And often stooping, hide thy head on ground.*

* An awkward way—chiefly for the rhyme's sake—of saying that roses are often too heavy for their stalks.

And then the lily, towering up so proud,
And raising its gay head among the various crowd,
There the black spots upon a scarlet ground,
And there the taper-pointed leaves are found.'

67. In 220 lines, of such quality, the first book ascends from the rose to the oak. The second begins—to my surprise, and in extremely exceptional violation of my above-boasted custom—with an ecstatic apostrophe to what I had never seen!

'I sing the Pine, which clothes high Switzer's * head.
And high enthroned, grows on a rocky bed,
On gulphs so deep, on cliffs that are so high,
He that would dare to climb them dares to die.'

This enthusiasm, however, only lasts—mostly exhausting itself in a description, verified out of Harry and Lucy, of the slide of Alpnach,—through 76 lines, when the verses cease, and the book being turned upside down, begins at the other end with the information that 'Rock-crystal is accompanied by Actynolite, Axinite, and Epidote, at Bourg d'Oisans in Dauphiny.' But the garden-meditations never ceased, and it is impossible to say how much strength was gained, or how

* Switzer, clearly short for Switzerland.

much time uselessly given, except in pleasure, to these quiet hours and foolish rhymes. Their happiness made all the duties of outer life irksome, and their unprogressive reveries might, the reader may think, if my mother had wished, have been changed into a beginning of sound botanical knowledge. But, while there were books on geology and mineralogy which I could understand, all on botany were then,—and they are little mended now,—harder than the Latin grammar. The mineralogy was enough for me seriously to work at, and I am inclined finally to aver that the garden-time could not have been more rightly passed, unless in weeding.

68. At six punctually I joined my father and mother at tea, being, in the drawing-room, restricted to the inhabitation of the sacred niche above referred to, a recess beside the fireplace, well lighted from the lateral window in the summer evenings, and by the chimney-piece lamp in winter, and out of all inconvenient heat, or hurtful draught. A good writing-table before it shut me well in, and carried my plate and cup, or books in service. After tea, my father read to my

mother what pleased themselves, I picking up what I could, or reading what I liked better instead. Thus I heard all the Shakespeare comedies and historical plays again and again, —all Scott, and all Don Quixote, a favourite book of my father's, and at which I could then laugh to ecstasy; now, it is one of the saddest, and, in some things, the most offensive of books to me.

My father was an absolutely beautiful reader of the *best* poetry and prose;—of Shakespeare, Pope, Spenser, Byron, and Scott; as of Goldsmith, Addison, and Johnson. Lighter ballad poetry he had not fineness of ear to do justice to: his sense of the strength and wisdom of true meaning, and of the force of rightly ordered syllables, made his delivery of Hamlet, Lear, Cæsar, or Marmion, melodiously grand and just; but he had no idea of modulating the refrain of a ballad, and had little patience with the tenor of its sentiment. He looked always, in the matter of what he read, for heroic will and consummate reason; never tolerated the morbid love of misery for its own sake, and never read, either for his own pleasure or my instruction, such ballads as

Burd Helen, the Twa Corbies, or any other rhyme or story which sought its interest in vain love or fruitless death.

But true, pure, and ennobling sadness began very early to mingle its undertone with the constant happiness of those days;—a ballad music, beautiful in sincerity, and hallowing them like cathedral chant. Concerning which, —I must go back now to the days I have only heard of with the hearing of the ear, and yet of which some are to me as if mine eyes had seen them.

69. It must have been a little after 1780 that my paternal grandmother, Catherine Tweeddale, ran away with my paternal grandfather when she was not quite sixteen; and my aunt Jessie, my father's only sister, was born a year afterwards; a few weeks after which event, my grandmother, not yet seventeen, was surprised, by a friend who came into her room unannounced, dancing a threesome reel, with two chairs for her partners; she having found at the moment no other way of adequately expressing the pleasure she took in this mortal life, and its gifts and promises.

The latter failed somewhat afterwards; and

my aunt Jessie, a very precious and perfect creature, beautiful in her dark-eyed, Highland way,—utterly religious, in her quiet Puritan way,—and very submissive to Fates mostly unkind, was married to a somewhat rough tanner, with a fairly good business in the good town of Perth: and, when I was old enough to be taken first to visit them, my aunt and my uncle the tanner lived in a square-built grey stone house in the suburb of Perth known as 'Bridge-End,' the house some fifty yards north of the bridge; its garden sloping steeply to the Tay, which eddied, three or four feet deep of sombre crystal, round the steps where the servants dipped their pails.

70. A mistaken correspondent in Fors once complained of my coarse habit of sneering at people of no ancestry. I have no such habit; though not always entirely at ease in writing of my uncles the baker and the tanner. And my readers may trust me when I tell them that, in now remembering my dreams in the house of the entirely honest chief baker of Market Street, Croydon, and of Peter—not Simon—the tanner, whose house was by the

riverside of Perth, I would not change the dreams, far less the tender realities of those early days, for anything I hear now remembered by lords or dames, of their days of childhood in castle halls, and by sweet lawns and lakes in park-walled forest.

Lawn and lake enough indeed I had, in the North Inch of Perth, and pools of pausing Tay, before Rose Terrace, (where I used to live after my uncle died, briefly apoplectic, at Bridge-End,) in the peace of the fair Scotch summer days, with my widowed aunt, and my little cousin Jessie, then traversing a bright space between her sixth and ninth year; dark-eyed deeply,* like her mother, and similarly pious; so that she and I used to compete in the Sunday evening Scriptural examinations, and be as proud as two little peacocks because Jessie's elder brothers, and sister Mary, used to get 'put down,' and either Jessie or I was always 'Dux.' We agreed upon this that we would be married when we were a little older; not considering it to be preparatorily necessary to be in any degree wiser.

* As opposed to the darkness of mere iris, making the eyes like black cherries.

Strangely, the kitchen servant-of-all-work in the house at Rose Terrace was a very old "Mause,"—before, my grandfather's servant in Edinburgh,—who might well have been the prototype of the Mause of 'Old Mortality,'* but had even a more solemn, fearless, and patient faith, fastened in her by extreme suffering; for she had been nearly starved to death when she was a girl, and had literally picked the bones out of cast-out dust-heaps to gnaw; and ever afterwards, to see the waste of an atom of food was as shocking to her as blasphemy. "Oh, Miss Margaret!" she said once to my mother, who had shaken

* Vulgar modern Puritanism has shown its degeneracy in nothing more than in its incapability of understanding Scott's exquisitely finished portraits of the Covenanter. In 'Old Mortality' alone, there are four which cannot be surpassed; the typical one, Elspeth, faultlessly sublime and pure; the second, Ephraim Macbriar, giving the too common phase of the character, which is touched with ascetic insanity; the third, Mause, coloured and made sometimes ludicrous by Scottish conceit, but utterly strong and pure at heart; the last, Balfour, a study of supreme interest, showing the effect of the Puritan faith, sincerely held, on a naturally and incurably cruel and base spirit. Add to these four studies, from this single novel, those in the 'Heart of Midlothian,' and Nicol Jarvie and Andrew Fairservice from 'Rob Roy,' and you have a series of theological analyses far beyond those of any other philosophical work that I know, of any period.

some crumbs off a dirty plate out of the window, "I had rather you had knocked me down." She would make her dinner upon anything in the house that the other servants wouldn't eat;—often upon potato skins, giving her own dinner away to any poor person she saw; and would always stand during the whole church service, (though at least seventy years old when I knew her, and very feeble,) if she could persuade any wild Amorite out of the streets to take her seat. Her wrinkled and worn face, moveless in resolution and patience, incapable of smile, and knit sometimes perhaps too severely against Jessie and me, if we wanted more creamy milk to our porridge, or jumped off our favourite box on Sunday,—('Never mind, John,' said Jessie to me, once seeing me in an unchristian state of provocation on this subject, 'when we're married, we'll jump off boxes all day long, if we like!')—may have been partly instrumental in giving me that slight bias against Evangelical religion, which I confess to be sometimes traceable in my later works; but I never can be thankful enough for having seen, in our own "Old Mause," the Scottish

Puritan spirit in its perfect faith and force; and been enabled therefore afterwards to trace its agency in the reforming policy of Scotland, with the reverence and honour it deserves.

72. My aunt, a pure dove-priestess, if ever there was one, of Highland Dodona, was of a far gentler temper; but still, to me, remained at a wistful distance. She had been much saddened by the loss of three of her children before her husband's death. Little Peter, especially, had been the corner-stone of her love's building; and it was thrown down swiftly:—white swelling came in the knee; he suffered much, and grew weaker gradually, dutiful always, and loving, and wholly patient. She wanted him one day to take half a glass of port wine, and took him on her knee, and put it to his lips. 'Not now, mamma; in a minute,' said he; and put his head on her shoulder, and gave one long, low sigh, and died. Then there was Catherine; and—I forget the other little daughter's name, I did not see them; my mother told me of them; —eagerly always about Catherine, who had been her own favourite. My aunt had been

talking earnestly one day with her husband about these two children; planning this and that for their schooling and what not: at night, for a little while she could not sleep; and as she lay thinking, she saw the door of the room open, and two spades come into it, and stand at the foot of her bed. Both the children were dead within brief time afterwards. I was about to write 'within a fortnight'—but I cannot be sure of remembering my mother's words accurately.

73. But when I was in Perth, there were still—Mary, her eldest daughter, who looked after us children when Mause was too busy; James and John, William and Andrew; (I can't think whom the unapostolic William was named after). But the boys were then all at school or college,—the scholars, William and Andrew, only came home to tease Jessie and me, and eat the biggest jargonel pears: the collegians were wholly abstract; and the two girls and I played in our quiet ways on the North Inch, and by the 'Lead,' a stream 'led' from the Tay past Rose Terrace into the town for molinary purposes; and long ago, I

suppose, bricked over or choked with rubbish; but then lovely, and a perpetual treasure of flowing diamond to us children. Mary, by the way, was ascending towards twelve—fair, blue-eyed, and moderately pretty; and as pious as Jessie, without being quite so zealous.

54. My father rarely stayed with us in Perth, but went on business travel through Scotland, and even my mother became a curiously unimportant figure at Rose Terrace. I can't understand how she so rarely walked with us children; she and my aunt seemed always to have their own secluded ways. Mary, Jessie, and I were allowed to do what we liked on the Inch: and I don't remember doing any lessons in these Perth times, except the above-described competitive divinity on Sunday.

Had there been anybody then to teach me anything about plants or pebbles, it had been good for me; as it was, I passed my days much as the thistles and tansy did, only with perpetual watching of all the ways of running water,—a singular awe developing itself in me, both of the pools of Tay, where the water

changed from brown to blue-black, and of the precipices of Kinnoull; partly out of my own mind, and partly because the servants always became serious when we went up Kinnoull way, especially if I wanted to stay and look at the little crystal spring of Bower's Well.

75. 'But you say you were not afraid of anything?' writes a friend, anxious for the unassailable veracity of these memoirs. Well, I said, not of ghosts, thunder, or beasts,—meaning to specify the commonest terrors of mere childhood. Every day, as I grew wiser, taught me a reasonable fear; else I had not above described myself as the most reasonable person of my acquaintance. And by the swirls of smooth blackness, broken by no fleck of foam, where Tay gathered herself like Medusa,* I never passed without awe, even in those thoughtless days; neither do I in the least mean that I could walk among tombstones in the night (neither, for that matter, in the day), as if they were only paving stones set upright. Far the contrary; but it

* I always think of Tay as a goddess river, as Greta a nymph one

is important to the reader's confidence in writings which have seemed inordinately impressional and emotional, that he should know I was never subject to—I should perhaps rather say, sorrowfully, never capable of—any manner of illusion or false imagination, nor in the least liable to have my nerves shaken by surprise. When I was about five years old, having been on amicable terms for a while with a black Newfoundland, then on probation for watch dog at Herne Hill; after one of our long summer journeys my first thought on getting home was to go to see Lion. My mother trusted me to go to the stable with our one serving-man, Thomas, giving him strict orders that I was not to be allowed within stretch of the dog's chain. Thomas, for better security, carried me in his arms. Lion was at his dinner, and took no notice of either of us; on which I besought leave to pat him. Foolish Thomas stooped towards him that I might, when the dog instantly flew at me, and bit a piece clean out of the corner of my lip on the left side. I was brought up the back stairs, bleeding fast, but not a whit frightened, except lest Lion should be sent away. Lion

indeed had to go; but, not Thomas; my mother was sure he was sorry, and I think blamed herself the most. The bitten side of the (then really pretty) mouth, was spoiled for evermore, but the wound, drawn close, healed quickly; the last use I made of my moveable lips before Dr. Aveline drew them into ordered silence for a while, was to observe, 'Mama, though I can't speak, I can play upon the fiddle.' But the house was of another opinion, and I never attained any proficiency upon that instrument worthy of my genius. Not the slightest diminution of my love of dogs, nor the slightest nervousness in managing them, was induced by the accident.

I scarcely know whether I was in any real danger or not when, another day, in the same stable, quite by myself, I went head foremost into the large water-tub kept for the garden. I think I might have got awkwardly wedged if I had tried to draw my feet in after me: instead, I used the small watering-pot I had in my hand to give myself a good thrust up from the bottom, and caught the opposite edge of the tub with my left hand, getting not a

little credit afterwards for my decision of method. Looking back to the few chances that have in any such manner tried my head, I believe it has never failed me when I wanted it, and that I am much more likely to be confused by sudden admiration than by sudden danger.

76. The dark pools of Tay, which have led me into this boasting, were under the high bank at the head of the North Inch,—the path above them being seldom traversed by us children unless at harvest time, when we used to go gleaning in the fields beyond; Jessie and I afterwards grinding our corn in the kitchen pepper-mill, and kneading and toasting for ourselves cakes of pepper bread, of quite unpurchaseable quality.

In the general course of this my careful narration, I rebut with as much indignation as may be permitted without ill manners, the charge of partiality to anything merely because it was seen when I was young. I hesitate, however, in recording as a constant truth for the world, the impression left on me when I went gleaning with Jessie, that Scottish

sheaves are more golden than are bound in other lands, and that no harvests elsewhere visible to human eyes are so like the 'corn of heaven'* as those of Strath-Tay and Strath-Earn.

* Psalm lxxviii. 24.

CHAPTER IV.

UNDER NEW TUTORSHIPS.

77. WHEN I was about eight or nine I had a bad feverish illness at Dunkeld, during which I believe I was in some danger, and am sure I was very uncomfortable. It came on after a long walk in which I had been gathering quantities of foxgloves and pulling them to pieces to examine their seeds, and there were hints about their having poisoned me; very absurd, but which extended the gathering awe from river eddies to foxglove dells. Not long after that, when we were back at home, my cousin Jessie fell ill, and died very slowly, of water on the brain. I was very sorry, not so much in any strength of early affection, as in the feeling that the happy, happy days at Perth were for ever ended, since there was no more Jessie.

Before her illness took its fatal form,—before, indeed, I believe it had at all declared

itself—my aunt dreamed one of her foresight dreams, simple and plain enough for any one's interpretation;—that she was approaching the ford of a dark river, alone, when little Jessie came running up behind her, and passed her, and went through first. Then she passed through herself, and looking back from the other side, saw her old Mause approaching from the distance to the bank of the stream. And so it was, that Jessie, immediately afterwards, sickened rapidly and died; and a few months, or it might be nearly a year afterwards, my aunt died of decline; and Mause, some two or three years later, having had no care after her mistress and Jessie were gone, but when she might go to them.

78. I was at Plymouth with my father and mother when my Scottish aunt died, and had been very happy with my nurse on the hill east of the town, looking out on the bay and breakwater; and came in to find my father, for the first time I had ever seen him, in deep distress of sobbing tears.

I was very sorry that my aunt was dead, but, at that time, (and a good deal since, also,) I lived mostly in the present, like an animal,

and my principal sensation was,—What a pity it was to pass such an uncomfortable evening —and we at Plymouth!

The deaths of Jessie and her mother of course ended our Scottish days. The only surviving daughter, Mary, was thenceforward adopted by my father and mother, and brought up with me. She was fourteen when she came to us, and I four years younger;—so with the Perth days, closed the first decade of my life. Mary was a rather pretty, blue-eyed, clumsily-made girl, very amiable and affectionate in a quiet way, with no parts, but good sense and good principle, honestly and inoffensively pious, and equal tempered, but with no pretty girlish ways or fancies. She became a serene additional neutral tint in the household harmony; read alternate verses of the Bible with my mother and me in the mornings, and went to a day school in the forenoon. When we travelled she took somewhat of a governess position towards me, we being allowed to explore places together without my nurse;—but we generally took old Anne too for better company.

79. It began now to be of some importance

what church I went to on Sunday morning. My father, who was still much broken in health, could not go to the long Church of England service, and, my mother being evangelical, he went contentedly, or at least submissively, with her and me to Beresford Chapel, Walworth, where the Rev. D. Andrews preached, regularly, a somewhat eloquent, forcible, and ingenious sermon, not tiresome to him:—the prayers were abridged from the Church Service, and we, being the grandest people in the congregation, were allowed—though, as I now remember, not without offended and reproachful glances from the more conscientious worshippers—to come in when even those short prayers were half over. Mary and I used each to write an abstract of the sermon in the afternoon, to please ourselves,—Mary dutifully, and I to show how well I could do it. We never went to church in afternoon or evening. I remember yet the amazed and appalling sensation, as of a vision preliminary to the Day of Judgment, of going, a year or two later, first into a church by candlelight.

80. We had no family worship, but our

servants were better cared for than is often the case in ostentatiously religious houses. My mother used to take them, when girls, from families known to her, sister after sister, and we never had a bad one.

On the Sunday evening my father would sometimes read us a sermon of Blair's, or it might be, a clerk or a customer would dine with us, when the conversation, in mere necessary courtesy, would take generally the direction of sherry. Mary and I got through the evening how we could, over the Pilgrim's Progress, Bunyan's Holy War, Quarles's Emblems, Foxe's Book of Martyrs, Mrs. Sherwood's Lady of the Manor,—a very awful book to me, because of the stories in it of wicked girls who had gone to balls, dying immediately after of fever,—and Mrs. Sherwood's Henry Milner,—of which more presently,—the Youth's Magazine, Alfred Campbell the young pilgrim, and, though rather as a profane indulgence, permitted because of the hardness of our hearts, Bingley's Natural History. We none of us cared for singing hymns or psalms as such, and were too honest to amuse ourselves with them as sacred music,

besides that we did not find their music amusing.

81. My father and mother, though due cheques for charities were of course sent to Dr. Andrews, and various civilities at Christmas, in the way of turkeys or boxes of raisins, intimated their satisfaction with the style of his sermons and purity of his doctrine,—had yet, with their usual shyness, never asked for his acquaintance, or even permitted the state of their souls to be inquired after in pastoral visits. Mary and I, however, were charmed merely by the distant effect of him, and used to walk with Anne up and down in Walworth, merely in the hope of seeing him pass on the other side of the way. At last, one day, when, by extreme favour of Fortune, he met us in a great hurry on our own side of it, and nearly tumbled over me, Anne, as he recovered himself, dropped him a low curtsey; whereupon he stopped, inquired who we were, and was extremely gracious to us; and we, coming home in a fever of delight, announced, not much to my mother's satisfaction, that the Doctor had said he would call some day! And so, little by little, the blissful acquaintance was

made. I might be eleven or going on twelve by that time. Miss Andrews, the eldest sister of the "Angel in the House," was an extremely beautiful girl of seventeen; she sang "Tambourgi, Tambourgi" * with great spirit and a rich voice, went at blackberry time on rambles with us at the Norwood Spa, and made me feel generally that there was something in girls that I did not understand, and that was curiously agreeable. And at last, because I was so fond of the Doctor, and he had the reputation (in Walworth) of being a good scholar, my father thought he might pleasantly initiate me in Greek, such initiation having been already too long deferred. The Doctor, it afterwards turned out, knew little more of Greek than the letters, and declensions of nouns; but he wrote the letters prettily, and had an accurate and sensitive ear for rhythm. He began me with the odes of Anacreon, and made me scan both them and my Virgil thoroughly, sometimes, by way of interlude, reciting bits of Shakespeare to me with force and propriety. The Anacreontic metre entirely pleased me, nor less the Anacreontic

* Hebrew melodies.

sentiment. I learned half the odes by heart merely to please myself, and learned with certainty, what in later study of Greek art it has proved extremely advantageous to me to know, that the Greeks liked doves, swallows, and roses just as well as I did.

82. In the intervals of these unlaborious Greek lessons, I went on amusing myself—partly in writing English doggerel, partly in map drawing, or copying Cruikshank's illustrations to Grimm, which I did with great, and to most people now incredible, exactness, a sheet of them being, by good hap, well preserved, done when I was between ten and eleven. But I never saw any boy's work in my life showing so little original faculty, or grasp by memory. I could literally draw nothing, not a cat, not a mouse, not a boat, not a bush, 'out of my head,' and there was, luckily, at present no idea on the part either of parents or preceptor, of teaching me to draw out of other people's heads.

Nevertheless, Mary, at her day school, was getting drawing lessons with the other girls. Her report of the pleasantness and zeal of the master, and the frank and somewhat

unusual execution of the drawings he gave her to copy, interested my father, and he was still more pleased by Mary's copying, for a proof of industry while he was away on his winter's journey—copying, in pencil so as to produce the effect of a vigorous engraving, the little water-colour by Prout of a wayside cottage, which was the foundation of our future water-colour collection, being then our only possession in that kind—of other kind, two miniatures on ivory completed our gallery.

83. I perceive, in thinking over the good work of that patient black and white study, that Mary could have drawn, if she had been well taught and kindly encouraged. But her power of patient copying did not serve her in drawing from nature, and when, that same summer, I between ten and eleven (1829), we went to stay at Matlock in Derbyshire, all that she proved able to accomplish was an outline of Caxton's New Bath Hotel, in which our efforts in the direction of art, for that year, ended.

But, in the glittering white broken spar, specked with galena, by which the walks of the hotel garden were made bright, and in

the shops of the pretty village, and in many a happy walk among its cliffs, I pursued my mineralogical studies on fluor, calcite, and the ores of lead, with indescribable rapture when I was allowed to go into a cave. My father and mother showed far more kindness than I knew, in yielding to my subterranean passion; for my mother could not bear dirty places, and my father had a nervous feeling that the ladders would break, or the roof fall, before we got out again. They went with me, nevertheless, wherever I wanted to go,—my father even into the terrible Speedwell mine at Castleton, where, for once, I was a little frightened myself.

From Matlock we must have gone on to Cumberland, for I find in my father's writing the legend, "Begun 28th November, 1830, finished 11th January, 1832," on the fly-leaf of the 'Iteriad,' a poem in four books, which I indited, between those dates, on the subject of our journey among the Lakes, and of which some little notice may be taken farther on.

84. It must have been in the spring of 1831 that the important step was taken of giving me a drawing master. Mary showed

no gift of representing any of the scenes of our travels, and I began to express some wish that I could draw myself. Whereupon, Mary's pleasant drawing master, to whom my father and mother were equitable enough not to impute Mary's want of genius, was invited to give *me* also an hour in the week.

I suppose a drawing master's business can only become established by his assertion of himself to the public as the possessor of a style; and teaching in that only. Nevertheless, Mr. Runciman's memory sustains disgrace in my mind in that he gave no impulse nor even indulgence to the extraordinary gift I had for drawing delicately with the pen point. Any work of that kind was done thenceforward only to please myself. Mr. Runciman gave me nothing but his own mannered and inefficient drawings to copy, and greatly broke the force both of my mind and hand.

Yet he taught me much, and suggested more. He taught me perspective, at once accurately and simply—an invaluable bit of teaching. He compelled me into a swiftness and facility of hand which I found afterwards extremely useful, though what I have just

called the 'force,' the strong accuracy of my line, was lost. He cultivated in me,—indeed founded,—the habit of looking for the essential points in the things drawn, so as to abstract them decisively, and he explained to me the meaning and importance of composition, though he himself could not compose.

85. A very happy time followed, for about two years.

I was, of course, far behind Mary in touch-skill of pencil drawing, and it was good for her that this superiority was acknowledged, and due honour done her for the steady pains of her unimpulsive practice and unwearied attention. For, as she did not write poems like me, nor collect spars like me, nor exhibit any prevailing vivacity of mind in any direction, she was gradually sinking into far too subordinate a position to my high-mightiness. But I could make no pretence for some time to rival her in free-hand copying, and my first attempts from nature were not felt by my father to be the least flattering to his vanity.

These were made under the stimulus of a journey to Dover with the forethought of which my mother comforted me through an

illness of 1829. I find my quite first sketch-book, an extremely inconvenient upright small octavo in mottled and flexible cover, the paper pure white, and ribbedly gritty, filled with outlines, irregularly defaced by impulsive efforts at finish, in arbitrary places and corners, of Dover and Tunbridge Castles and the main tower of Canterbury Cathedral. These, with a really good study, supplemented by detached detail, of Battle Abbey, I have set aside for preservation; the really first sketch I ever made from nature being No. 1, of a street in Sevenoaks. I got little satisfaction and less praise by these works; but the native architectural instinct is instantly developed in these, —highly notable for any one who cares to note such nativities. Two little pencillings from Canterbury south porch and central tower, I have given to Miss Gale, of Burgate House, Canterbury; the remnants of the book itself to Mrs. Talbot, of Tyn-y-Ffynon, Barmouth, both very dear friends.

86. But before everything, at this time, came my pleasure in merely watching the sea. I was not allowed to row, far less to sail, nor to walk near the harbour alone; so that I

learned nothing of shipping or anything else worth learning, but spent four or five hours every day in simply staring and wondering at the sea,—an occupation which never failed me till I was forty. Whenever I could get to a beach it was enough for me to have the waves to look at, and hear, and pursue and fly from. I never took to natural history of shells, or shrimps, or weeds, or jelly-fish. Pebbles?—yes if there were any; otherwise, merely stared all day long at the tumbling and creaming strength of the sea. Idiotically, it now appears to me, wasting all that priceless youth in mere dream and trance of admiration; it had a certain strain of Byronesque passion in it, which meant something: but it was a fearful loss of time.

87. The summer of 1832 must, I think, have been passed at home, for my next sketch-book contains only some efforts at tree-drawing in Dulwich, and a view of the bridge over the now bricked-up "Effra," by which the Norwood road then crossed it at the bottom of Herne Hill: the road itself, just at the place where, from the top of the bridge, one looked up and down the streamlet,

bridged now into putridly damp shade by the railway, close to Herne Hill Station. This sketch was the first in which I was ever supposed to show any talent for drawing. But on my thirteenth (?) birthday, 8th February, 1832, my father's partner, Mr. Henry Telford, gave me Rogers' Italy, and determined the main tenor of my life.

At that time I had never heard of Turner, except in the well remembered saying of Mr. Runciman's, that 'the world had lately been much dazzled and led away by some splendid ideas thrown out by Turner.' But I had no sooner cast eyes on the Rogers vignettes than I took them for my only masters, and set myself to imitate them as far as I possibly could by fine pen shading.

88 I have told this story so often that I begin to doubt its time. It is curiously tiresome that Mr. Telford did not himself write my name in the book, and my father, who writes in it, 'The gift of Henry Telford, Esq.,' still more curiously, for him, puts no date: if it was a year later, no matter; there is no doubt however that early in the spring of 1833 Prout published his Sketches in

Flanders and Germany. I well remember going with my father into the shop where subscribers entered their names, and being referred to the specimen print, the turreted window over the Moselle, at Coblentz.' We got the book home to Herne Hill before the time of our usual annual tour; and as my mother watched my father's pleasure and mine in looking at the wonderful places, she said, why should not we go and see some of them in reality? My father hesitated a little, then with glittering eyes said—why not? And there were two or three weeks of entirely rapturous and amazed preparation. I recollect that very evening bringing down my big geography book, still most precious to me; (I take it down now, and for the first time put my own initials under my father's name in it)—and looking with Mary at the outline of Mont Blanc, copied from Saussure, at p. 201, and reading some of the very singular information about the Alps which it illustrates. So that Switzerland must have been at once included in the plans,—soon prosperously, and with result of all manner of good, by God's help fulfilled.

89. We went by Calais and Brussels to Cologne; up the Rhine to Strasburg, across the Black Forest to Schaffhausen, then made a sweep through North Switzerland by Basle, Berne, Interlachen, Lucerne, Zurich, to Constance,—following up the Rhine still to Coire, then over Splugen to Como, Milan, and Genoa; meaning, as I now remember, for Rome. But, it being June already, the heat of Genoa warned us of imprudence: we turned, and came back over the Simplon to Geneva, saw Chamouni, and so home by Lyons and Dijon.

To do all this in the then only possible way, with post-horses, and, on the lakes, with oared boats, needed careful calculation of time each day. My father liked to get to our sleeping place as early as he could, and never would stop the horses for me to draw anything (the extra pence to postillion for waiting being also an item of weight in his mind);—thus I got into the bad habit, yet not without its discipline, of making scrawls as the carriage went along, and working them up 'out of my head' in the evening. I produced in this manner, throughout the journey, some thirty sheets or so of small pen and Indian ink

drawings, four or five in a sheet; some not inelegant, all laborious, but for the most part one just like another, and without exception stupid and characterless to the last degree.

90. With these flying scrawls on the road, I made, when staying in towns, some elaborate pencil and pen outlines, of which perhaps half-a-dozen are worth register and preservation. My father's pride in a study of the doubly-towered Renaissance church of Dijon was great. A still more laborious Hôtel de Ville of Brussels remains with it at Brantwood. The drawing of that Hôtel de Ville by me now at Oxford is a copy of Prout's, which I made in illustration of the volume in which I wrote the beginning of a rhymed history of the tour.

For it had excited all the poor little faculties that were in me to their utmost strain, and I had certainly more passionate happiness, of a quality utterly indescribable to people who never felt the like, and more, in solid quantity, in those three months, than most people have in all their lives. The impression of the Alps first seen from Schaffhausen, of Milan and of Geneva, I will try to give some account

of afterwards,—my first business now is to get on.

91. The winter of '33, and what time I could steal to amuse myself in, out of '34, were spent in composing, writing fair, and drawing vignettes for the decoration of the aforesaid poetical account of our tour, in imitation of Rogers' Italy. The drawings were made on separate pieces of paper and pasted into the books; many have since been taken out, others are there for which the verses were never written, for I had spent my fervour before I got up the Rhine. I leave the unfinished folly in Joanie's care, that none but friends may see it.

Meantime, it having been perceived by my father and mother that Dr. Andrews could neither prepare me for the University, nor for the duties of a bishopric, I was sent as a day scholar to the private school kept by the Rev. Thomas Dale, in Grove Lane, within walking distance of Herne Hill. Walking down with my father after breakfast, carrying my blue bag of books, I came home to half-past one dinner, and prepared my lessons in the evening for next day. Under these

conditions I saw little of my fellow-scholars, the two sons of Mr. Dale, Tom and James; and three boarders, the sons of Colonel Matson, of Woolwich; of Alderman Key, of Denmark Hill; and a fine lively boy, Willoughby Jones, afterwards Sir W., and only lately, to my sorrow, dead.

92. Finding me in all respects what boys could only look upon as an innocent, they treated me as I suppose they would have treated a girl; they neither thrashed nor chaffed me,—finding, indeed, from the first that chaff had no effect on me. Generally I did not understand it, nor in the least mind it if I did, the fountain of pure conceit in my own heart sustaining me serenely against all deprecation, whether by master or companion. I was fairly intelligent of books, had a good quick and holding memory, learned whatever I was bid as fast as I could, and as well; and since all the other boys learned always as little as they could, though I was far in retard of them in real knowledge, I almost always knew the day's lesson best. I have already described, in the first chapter of Fiction Fair and Foul, Mr. Dale's rejection of my clearly

known old grammar as a 'Scotch thing.' In that one action he rejected himself from being my master; and I thenceforward learned all he told me only because I had to do it.

93. While these steps were taken for my classical advancement, a master was found for me, still in that unlucky Walworth, to teach me mathematics. Mr. Rowbotham was an extremely industrious, deserving, and fairly well-informed person in his own branches, who, with his wife, and various impediments and inconveniences in the way of children, kept a 'young gentleman's Academy' near the Elephant and Castle, in one of the first houses which have black plots of grass in front, fenced by iron railings from the Walworth Road.

He knew Latin, German, and French grammar; was able to teach the 'use of the globes' as far as needed in a preparatory school, and was, up to far beyond the point needed for me, a really sound mathematician. For the rest, utterly unacquainted with men or their history, with nature and its meanings; stupid and disconsolate, incapable of any manner of mirth or fancy, thinking mathematics the only proper occupation of human

intellect, asthmatic to a degree causing often helpless suffering, and hopelessly poor, spending his evenings, after his school-drudgery was over, in writing manuals of arithmetic and algebra, and compiling French and German grammars, which he allowed the booksellers to cheat him out of,—adding perhaps, with all his year's lamp-labour, fifteen or twenty pounds to his income;—a more wretched, innocent, patient, insensible, unadmirable, uncomfortable, intolerable being never was produced in this æra of England by the culture characteristic of her metropolis.

94. Under the tuition, twice a week in the evening, of Mr. Rowbotham, (invited always to substantial tea with us before the lesson as a really efficient help to his hungry science, after the walk up Herne Hill, painful to asthma,) I prospered fairly in 1834, picking up some bits of French grammar, of which I had really felt the want,—I had before got hold, somehow, of words enough to make my way about with,—and I don't know how, but I recollect, at Paris, going to the Louvre under charge of Salvador, (I wanted to make a sketch from Rembrandt's Supper at Emmaus,) and

on Salvador's application to the custode for permission, it appeared I was not old enough to have a ticket,—fifteen was then the earliest admission-age; but seeing me look woebegone, the good-natured custode said he thought if I went in to the 'Board,' or whatever it was, of authorities, and asked for permission myself, they would give it me. Whereupon I instantly begged to be introduced to the Board, and the custode taking me in under his coat lappets, I did verily, in what broken French was feasible to me, represent my case to several gentlemen of an official and impressive aspect, and got my permission, and outlined the Supper at Emmaus with some real success in expression, and was extremely proud of myself. But my narrow knowledge of the language, though thus available for business, left me sorrowful and ashamed after the fatal dinner at Mr. Domecq's, when the little Elise, then just nine, seeing that her elder sisters did not choose to trouble themselves with me, and being herself of an entirely benevolent and pitiful temper, came across the drawing-room to me in my desolation, and leaning an elbow on my knee, set herself deliberately to chatter to me

mellifluously for an hour and a half by the time-piece,—requiring no answer, of which she saw I was incapable, but satisfied with my grateful and respectful attention, and admiring interest, if not exactly always in what she said, at least in the way she said it. She gave me the entire history of her school, and of the objectionable characters of her teachers, and of the delightful characters of her companions, and of the mischief she got into, and the surreptitious enjoyments they devised, and the joys of coming back to the Champs Elysées, and the general likeness of Paris to the Garden of Eden. And the hour and a half seemed but too short, and left me resolved, anyhow, to do my best to learn French.

95. So, as I said, I progressed in this study to the contentment of Mr. Rowbotham, went easily through the three first books of Euclid, and got as far as quadratics in Algebra. But there I stopped, virtually, for ever. The moment I got into sums of series, or symbols expressing the relations instead of the real magnitudes of things,—partly in want of faculty, partly in an already well-developed and healthy hatred of things vainly bothering

and intangible,—I gibbed—or stood stunned. Afterwards at Oxford they dragged me through some conic sections, of which the facts representable by drawing became afterwards of extreme value to me; and taught me as much trigonometry as made my mountain work, in plan and elevation, unaccusable. In elementary geometry I was always happy, and, for a boy, strong; and my conceit, developing now every hour more venomously as I began to perceive the weaknesses of my masters, led me to spend nearly every moment I could command for study in my own way, through the year 1835, in trying to trisect an angle. For some time afterwards I had the sense to reproach myself for the waste of thoughtful hours in that year, little knowing or dreaming how many a year to come, from that time forth, was to be worse wasted.

While the course of my education was thus daily gathering the growth of me into a stubborn little standard bush, various frost-stroke was stripping away from me the poor little flowers—or herbs—of the forest, that had once grown, happily for me, at my side.

CHAPTER V.

PARNASSUS AND PLYNLIMMON.

96. I HAVE allowed, in the last chapter, my record of boyish achievements and experiments in art to run on to a date much in advance of the early years which were most seriously eventful for me in good and evil. I resume the general story of them with the less hesitation, because, such as it is, nobody else can tell it; while, in later years, my friends in some respects know me better than I know myself.

The second decade of my life was cut away still more sharply from the perfectly happy time of childhood, by the death of my Croydon aunt; death of 'cold' literally, caught in some homely washing operations in an east wind. Her brown and white spaniel, Dash, lay beside her body, and on her coffin, till they were taken away from him; then he was brought to Herne Hill, and I think had been my

companion some time before Mary came to us.

With the death of my Croydon aunt ended for me all the days by Wandel streams, as at Perth by Tay; and thus when I was ten years old, an exclusively Herne Hill-top life set in (when we were not travelling), of no very beneficial character.

97. My Croydon aunt left four sons—John, William, George, and Charles; and two daughters—Margaret and Bridget. All handsome lads and pretty lasses; but Margaret, in early youth, met with some mischance that twisted her spine, and hopelessly deformed her. She was clever, and witty, like her mother; but never of any interest to me, though I gave a kind of brotherly, rather than cousinly, affection to all my Croydon cousins. But I never liked invalids, and don't to this day; and Margaret used to wear her hair in ringlets, which I couldn't bear the sight of.

Bridget was a very different creature; a black-eyed, or, with precision, dark hazel-eyed, slim-made, lively girl; a little too sharp in the features to be quite pretty, a little too wiry-jointed to be quite graceful; capricious,

and more or less selfish in temper, yet nice enough to be once or twice asked to Perth with us, or to stay for a month or two at Herne Hill; but never attaching herself much to us, neither us to her. I felt her an inconvenience in my nursery arrangements, the nursery having become my child's study as I grew studious; and she had no mind, or, it might be, no leave, to work with me in the garden.

98. The four boys were all of them good, and steadily active. The eldest, John, with wider business habits than the rest, went soon to push his fortune in Australia, and did so; the second, William, prospered also in London.

The third brother, George, was the best of boys and men, but of small wit. He extremely resembled a rural George the Fourth, with an expansive, healthy, benevolent eagerness of simplicity in his face, greatly bettering him as a type of British character. He went into the business in Market Street, with his father, and both were a great joy to all of us in their affectionateness and truth: neither of them in all their lives ever did a dishonest,

unkind, or otherwise faultful thing—but still less a clever one! For the present, I leave them happily filling and driving their cart of quartern loaves in morning round from Market Street.

99. The fourth, and youngest, Charles, was like the last-born in a fairy tale, ruddy as the boy David, bright of heart, not wanting in common sense, or even in *good* sense; and affectionate, like all the rest. He took to his schooling kindly, and became grammatical, polite, and presentable in our high Herne Hill circle. His elder brother, John, had taken care of his education in more important matters: very early in the child's life he put him on a barebacked pony, with the simple elementary instruction that he should be thrashed if he came off. And he stayed on. Similarly, for first lesson in swimming, he pitched the boy like a pebble into the middle of the Croydon Canal, jumping in, of course, after him; but I believe the lad squattered to the bank without help, and became when he was only 'that high' a fearless master of horse and wave.

100. My mother used to tell these two

stories with the greater satisfaction, because, in her own son's education, she had sacrificed her pride in his heroism to her anxiety for his safety; and never allowed me to go to the edge of a pond, or be in the same field with a pony. As ill-luck also would have it, there was no manner of farm or marsh near us, which might of necessity modify these restrictions; but I have already noted with thankfulness the good I got out of the tadpole-haunted ditch in Croxted Lane; while also, even between us and tutorial Walworth, there was one Elysian field for me in the neglected grass of Camberwell Green. There *was* a pond in the corner of it, of considerable size, and unknown depth,—probably, even in summer, full three feet in the middle; the sable opacity of its waters adding to the mystery of danger. Large, as I said, for a pond, perhaps sixty or seventy yards the long way of the Green, fifty the short; while on its western edge grew a stately elm, from whose boughs, it was currently reported, and conscientiously believed, a wicked boy had fallen into the pond on Sunday, and forthwith the soul of him into a deeper and darker pool.

It was one of the most valued privileges of my early life to be permitted by my nurse to contemplate this judicial pond with awe, from the other side of the way. The loss of it, by the sanitary conversion of Gamberwell Green into a bouquet for Camberwell's button-hole, is to this day matter of perennial lament to me.

101. In the carrying out of the precautionary laws above described I was, of course, never allowed, on my visits to Croydon, to go out with my cousins, lest they should lead me into mischief; and no more adventurous joys were ever possible to me there, than my walks with Anne or my mother where the stream from Scarborough pond ran across the road; or on the crisp turf of Duppas Hill; my watchings of the process of my father's drawings in Indian ink, and my own untired contemplations of the pump and gutter on the other side of the so-called street, but really lane,—not more than twelve feet from wall to wall. So that, when at last it was thought that Charles, with all his good natural gifts and graces, should be brought from Croydon town to London city, and initiated into the

lofty life and work of its burgess orders; and when, accordingly, he was, after various taking of counsel and making of enquiry, apprenticed to Messrs. Smith, Elder, & Co., of 65, Cornhill, with the high privilege of coming out to dine at Herne Hill every Sunday, the new and beaming presence of cousin Charles became a vivid excitement, and admirable revelation of the activities of youth to me, and I began to get really attached to him.

I was not myself the sort of creature that a boy could care much for,—or indeed any human being, except papa and mama, and Mrs. Richard Gray (of whom more presently); being indeed nothing more than a conceited and unentertainingly troublesome little monkey. But Charles was always kind to me, and naturally answered with some cousinly or even brotherly tenderness my admiration of him, and delight in him.

102. At Messrs. Smith & Elder's he was an admittedly exemplary apprentice, rapidly becoming a serviceable shopman, taking orders intelligently, and knowing well both his books and his customers. As all right-minded apprentices and good shopmen do, he took

personal pride in everything produced by the firm; and on Sundays always brought a volume or two in his pocket to show us the character of its most ambitious publications; especially choosing, on my behalf, any which chanced to contain good engravings. In this way I became familiar with Stanfield and Harding long before I possessed a single engraving myself from either of them; but the really most precious, and continuous in deep effect upon me, of all gifts to my childhood, was from my Croydon aunt, of the Forget-me-not of 1827, with a beautiful engraving in it of Prout's 'Sepulchral monument at Verona.'

Strange, that the true first impulse to the most refined instincts of my mind should have been given by my totally uneducated, but entirely good and right-minded, mother's sister.

103. But more magnificent results came of Charles's literary connection, through the interest we all took in the embossed and gilded small octavo which Smith & Elder published annually, by title 'Friendship's Offering.' This was edited by a pious Scotch missionary,

and minor—very much minor—key, poet, Thomas Pringle; mentioned once or twice with a sprinkling of honour in Lockhart's Life of Scott. A strictly conscientious and earnest, accurately trained, though narrowly learned, man, with all the Scottish conceit, restlessness for travel, and petulant courage of the Parks and Livingstones; with also some pretty tinges of romance and inklings of philosophy to mellow him, he was an admitted, though little regarded, member of the best literary circles, and acquainted, in the course of catering for his little embossed octavo, with everybody in the outer circles, and lower, down to little me. He had been patronised by Scott; was on terms of polite correspondence with Wordsworth and Rogers; of familiar intercourse with the Ettrick Shepherd; and had himself written a book of poems on the subject of Africa, in which antelopes were called springboks, and other African manners and customs carefully observed.

104. Partly to oblige the good-natured and lively shopboy, who told wonderful things of his little student cousin;—partly in the look-out for thin compositions of tractable

studied, wherewith to fill interstices in the masonry of 'Friendship's Offering,' Mr. Pringle visited us at Herne Hill, heard the traditions of my literary life, expressed some interest in its farther progress,—and sometimes took a copy of verses away in his pocket. He was the first person who intimated to my father and mother, with some decision, that there were as yet no wholly trustworthy indications of my one day occupying a higher place in English literature than either Milton or Byron; and accordingly I think none of us attached much importance to his opinions. But he had the sense to recognise, through the parental vanity, my father's high natural powers, and exquisitely romantic sensibility; not less my mother's tried sincerity in the evangelical faith, which he had set himself apart to preach: and he thus became an honoured, though never quite cordially welcomed, guest on occasions of state Sunday dinner; and more or less an adviser thenceforward of the mode of my education. He himself found interest enough in my real love of nature and ready faculty of rhyme, to induce him to read and criticize for me some of

my verses with attention; and at last, was a sacred Eleusinian initiation and Delphic pilgrimage, to take me in his hand one day when he had a visit to pay to the poet Rogers.

105. The old man, previously warned of my admissible claims, in Mr. Pringle's sight, to the beatitude of such introduction, was sufficiently gracious to me, though the cultivation of germinating genius was never held by Mr. Rogers to be an industry altogether delectable to genius in its zenith. Moreover, I was unfortunate in the line of observations by which, in return for his notice, I endeavoured to show myself worthy of it. I congratulated him with enthusiasm on the beauty of the engravings by which his poems were illustrated,—but betrayed, I fear me, at the same time some lack of an equally vivid interest in the composition of the poems themselves. At all events, Mr. Pringle—I thought at the time, somewhat abruptly—diverted the conversation to subjects connected with Africa. These were doubtless more calculated to interest the polished minstrel of St. James's Place; but again I fell into misdemeanours by allowing my own attention, as my wandering

eyes too frankly confessed, to determine itself on the picture glowing from the crimson-silken walls; and accordingly, after we had taken leave, Mr. Pringle took occasion to advise me that, in future, when I was in the company of distinguished men, I should listen more attentively to their conversation.

106. These, and such other—(I have elsewhere related the Ettrick Shepherd's favouring visit to us, also obtained by Mr. Pringle)—glorifications and advancements being the reward of my literary efforts, I was nevertheless not beguiled by them into any abandonment of the scientific studies which were indeed natural and delightful to me. I have above registered their beginnings in the sparry walks at Matlock: but my father's business also took him often to Bristol, where he placed my mother, with Mary and me, at Clifton. Miss Edgeworth's story of Lazy Lawrence, and the visit to Matlock by Harry and Lucy, gave an almost romantic and visionary charm to mineralogy in those dells; and the piece of iron oxide with bright Bristol diamonds,—No. 51 of the Brantwood collection,—was I think the first stone on which

I began my studies of silica. The diamonds of it were bright with many an association besides, since from Clifton we nearly always crossed to Chepstow,—the rapture of being afloat, for half-an-hour even, on that muddy sea, concentrating into these impressive minutes the pleasures of a year of other boys' boating, —and so round by Tintern and Malvern, where the hills, extremely delightful in themselves to me because I was allowed to run free on them, there being no precipices to fall over nor streams to fall into, were also classical to me through Mrs. Sherwood's 'Henry Milner,' a book which I loved long, and respect still. So that there was this of curious and precious in the means of my education in these years, that my romance was always ratified to me by the seal of locality —and every charm of locality spiritualized by the glow and the passion of romance.

107. There was one district, however, that of the Cumberland lakes, which needed no charm of association to deepen the appeal of its realities. I have said somewhere that my first memory in life was of Friar's Crag on Derwentwater:—meaning, I suppose, my first

memory of things afterwards chiefly precious to me; at all events, I knew Keswick before I knew Perth, and after the Perth days were ended, my mother and I stayed either there, at the Royal Oak, or at Lowwood Inn, or at Coniston Waterhead, while my father went on his business journeys to Whitehaven, Lancaster, Newcastle, and other northern towns. The inn at Coniston was then actually at the upper end of the lake, the road from Ambleside to the village passing just between it and the water; and the view of the long reach of lake, with its softly wooded lateral hills, had for my father a tender charm which excited the same feeling as that with which he afterwards regarded the lakes of Italy. Lowwood Inn also was then little more than a country cottage,—and Ambleside a rural village; and the absolute peace and bliss which any one who cared for grassy hills and for sweet waters might find at every footstep, and at every turn of crag or bend of bay, was totally unlike anything I ever saw, or read of, elsewhere.

108. My first sight of bolder scenery was in Wales; and I have written,—more than it

would be wise to print,—about the drive from Hereford to Rhaiadyr, and under Plynlimmon to Pont-y-Monach: the joy of a walk with my father in the Sunday afternoon towards Hafod, dashed only with some alarmed sense of the sin of being so happy among the hills, instead of writing out a sermon at home;—my father's presence and countenance not wholly comforting me, for we both of us had alike a subdued consciousness of being profane and rebellious characters, compared to my mother.

From Pont-y-Monach we went north, gathering pebbles on the beach at Aberystwith, and getting up Cader Idris with help of ponies:—it remained, and rightly, for many a year after, a king of mountains to me. Followed Harlech and its sands, Festiniog, the pass of Aberglaslyn, and marvel of Menai Straits and Bridge, which I looked at, then, as Miss Edgeworth had taught me, with reverence for the mechanical skill of man,—little thinking, poor innocent, what use I should see the creature putting his skill to, in the half century to come.

The Menai *Bridge* it was, remember, good

reader, not *tubes*;—but the trim plank roadway swinging smooth between its iron cobwebs from tower to tower.

109. And so on to Llanberis and up Snowdon, of which ascent I remember, as the most exciting event, the finding for the first time in my life a real "mineral" for myself, a piece of copper pyrites! But the general impression of Welsh mountain form was so true and clear that subsequent journeys little changed or deepened it.

And if only then my father and mother had seen the real strengths and weaknesses of their little John;—if they had given me but a shaggy scrap of a Welsh pony, and left me in charge of a good Welsh guide, and of his wife, if I needed any coddling, they would have made a man of me there and then, and afterwards the comfort of their own hearts, and probably the first geologist of my time in Europe.

If only! But they could no more have done it than thrown me like my cousin Charles into Croydon Canal, trusting me to find my way out by the laws of nature.

110. Instead, they took me back to London,

and my father spared time from his business hours, once or twice a week, to take me to a four-square, sky-lighted, sawdust-floored prison of a riding-school in Moorfields, the smell of which, as we turned in at the gate of it, was a terror and horror and abomination to me: and there I was put on big horses that jumped, and reared, and circled, and sidled; and fell off them regularly whenever they did any of those things; and was a disgrace to my family, and a burning shame and misery to myself, till at last the riding-school was given up on my spraining my right-hand forefinger (it has never come straight again since), —and a well-broken Shetland pony bought for me, and the two of us led about the Norwood roads by a riding master with a leading string. I used to do pretty well as long as we went straight, and then get thinking of something, and fall off when we turned a corner. I might have got some inkling of a seat in Heaven's good time, if no fuss had been made about me, nor inquiries instituted whether I had been off or on; but as my mother, the moment I got home, made searching scrutiny into the day's disgraces, I merely got more

and more nervous and helpless after every tumble; and this branch of my education was at last abandoned, my parents consoling themselves, as best they might, in the conclusion that my not being able to learn to ride was the sign of my being a singular genius.

111. The rest of the year was passed in such home employment as I have above described;—but, either in that or the preceding year, my mineralogical taste received a new and very important impulse from a friend who entered afterwards intimately into our family life, but of whom I have not yet spoken.

My illness at Dunkeld, above noticed, was attended by two physicians,—my mother,—and Dr. Grant. The Doctor must then have been a youth who had just obtained his diploma. I do not know the origin of his acquaintance with my parents; but I know that my father had almost paternal influence over him; and was of service to him, to what extent I know not, but certainly continued and effective, in beginning the world. And as I grew older I used often to hear expressions of much affection and respect for Dr. Grant

from my father and mother, coupled with others of regret or blame that he did not enough bring out his powers, or use his advantages.

Ever after the Dunkeld illness, Dr. Grant's name was associated in my mind with a brown powder—rhubarb, or the like—of a gritty and acrid nature, which, by his orders, I had then to take. The name thenceforward always sounded to me gr-r-ish and granular; and a certain dread, not amounting to dislike—but, on the contrary, affectionate, (for *me*)—made the Doctor's presence somewhat solemnizing to me; the rather as he never jested, and had a brownish, partly austere, and sere, wrinkled, and—rhubarby, in fact, sort of a face. For the rest, a man entirely kind and conscientious, much affectionate to my father, and acknowledging a sort of ward-to-guardian's duty to him, together with the responsibility of a medical adviser, acquainted both with his imagination and his constitution.

112. I conjecture that it must have been owing to Dr. Grant's being of fairly good family, and in every sense and every reality

of the word a gentleman, that, soon after coming up to London, he got a surgeon's appointment in one of His Majesty's frigates commissioned for a cruise on the west coast of South America. Fortunately the health of her company gave the Doctor little to do professionally; and he was able to give most of his time to the study of the natural history of the coast of Chili and Peru. One of the results of these shore expeditions was the finding such a stag-beetle as had never before been seen. It had peculiar or colossal nippers, and—I forget what 'chiasos' means in Greek, but its jaws were chiasoi. It was brought home beautifully packed in a box of cotton; and, when the box was opened, excited the admiration of all beholders, and was called the 'Chiasognathos Grantii.' A second result was his collection of a very perfect series of Valparaiso humming birds, out of which he spared, for a present to my mother, as many as filled with purple and golden flutter two glass cases as large as Mr. Gould's at the British Museum, which became replendent decorations of the drawing-room at Herne Hill,—were to me, as I grew older,

conclusive standards of plume texture and colour, — and are now placed in the best lighted recess of the parish school at Coniston.

113. The third result was more important still. Dr. Grant had been presented by the Spanish masters of mines with characteristic and rich specimens of the most beautiful vein-stones of Copiapo. It was a mighty fact for me, at the height of my child's interest in minerals, to see our own parlour table loaded with foliated silver and arborescent gold. Not only the man of science, but the latent miser in me, was developed largely in an hour or two! In the pieces which Dr. Grant gave me, I counted my treasure grain by grain; and recall to-day, in acute sympathy with it, the indignation I felt at seeing no instantly reverential change in cousin Charles's countenance, when I informed him that the film on the surface of an unpresuming specimen, amounting in quantity to about the sixteenth part of a sixpence, was 'native silver'!

Soon after his return from this prosperous voyage, Dr. Grant settled himself in a respectable house half-way down Richmond Hill, where gradually he obtained practice and

accepted position among the gentry of that town and its parkly neighbourhood. And every now and then, in the summer mornings, or the gaily frost-white winter ones, we used, papa and mamma, and Mary and I, to drive over Clapham and Wandsworth Commons to a breakfast picnic with Dr. Grant at the "Star and Garter." Breakfasts much impressed on my mind, partly by the pretty view from the windows; but more, because while my orthodox breakfast, even in travelling, was of stale baker's bread, at these starry picnics I was allowed new French roll.

114. Leaving Dr. Grant, for the nonce, under these pleasant and dignifiedly crescent circumstances, I must turn to the friends who of all others, not relatives, were most powerfully influential on my child life,—Mr. and Mrs. Richard Gray.

Some considerable time during my father's clerkdom had been passed by him in Spain, in learning to know sherry, and seeing the ways of making and storing it at Xerez, Cadiz, and Lisbon. At Lisbon he became intimate with another young Scotsman of about his own age, also employed, I conceive, as a clerk, in some

Spanish house, but himself of no narrow clerkly mind. On the contrary, Richard Gray went far beyond my father in the romantic sentiment, and scholarly love of good literature, which so strangely mingled with my father's steady business habits. Equally energetic, industrious, and high-principled, Mr. Gray's enthusiasm was nevertheless irregularly, and too often uselessly, coruscant; being to my father's, as Carlyle says of French against English fire at Dettingen, "faggot against anthracite." Yet, I will not venture absolutely to maintain that, under Richard's erratic and effervescent influence, an expedition to Cintra, or an assistance at a village festa, or even at a bull-fight, might not sometimes, to that extent, invalidate my former general assertion that, during nine years, my father never had a holiday. At all events, the young men became close and affectionate friends; and the connection had a softening, cheering, and altogether beneficent effect on my father's character. Nor was their brotherly friendship any whit flawed or dimmed, when, a little while before leaving Spain, Mr. Gray married an

extremely good and beautiful Scotch girl, Mary Monro.

115. Extremely good, and, in the gentlest way;—entirely simple, meek, loving, and serious; not clever enough to be any way naughty, but saved from being stupid by a vivid nature, full of enthusiasm like her husband's. Both of them evangelically pious, in a vivid, not virulent, way; and each of them sacredly, no less than passionately, in love with the other, they were the entirely best-matched pair I have yet seen in this match-making world and dispensation. Yet, as fate would have it, they had the one grief of having no children, which caused it, in years to come, to be Mrs. Gray's principal occupation in life to spoil *me*. By the time I was old enough to be spoiled, Mr. Gray, having fairly prospered in business, and come to London, was established, with his wife, her mother, and her mother's white French poodle, Petite, in a dignified house in Camberwell Grove. An entirely happy family; old Mrs. Monro as sweet as her daughter, perhaps slightly wiser; Richard rejoicing in them both with all his heart; and Petite, having, perhaps,

as much sense as any two of them, delighted in, and beloved by all three.

116. Their house was near the top of the Grove,—which was a real grove in those days, and a grand one, some three-quarters of a mile long, steepishly down hill,—beautiful in perspective as an unprecedently "long-drawn aisle;" trees, elm, wych elm, sycamore and aspen, the branches meeting at top; the houses on each side with trim stone pathways up to them, through small plots of well-mown grass; three or four storied, mostly in grouped terraces,—well-built, of sober-coloured brick, with high and steep slated roof —not gabled, but polygonal; all well to do, well kept, well broomed, dignifiedly and pleasantly vulgar, and their own Grove-world all in all to them. It was a pleasant mile and a furlong or two's walk from Herne Hill to the Grove; and whenever Mrs. Gray and my mother had anything to say to each other, they walked—up the hill or down—to say it; and Mr. Gray's house was always the same to us as our own at any time of day or night. But our house not at all so to the Grays, having its formalities inviolable; so that during the

whole of childhood I had the sense that we were, in some way or other, always above our friends and relations,—more or less patronizing everybody, favouring them by our advice, instructing them by our example, and called upon, by what was due both to ourselves, and the constitution of society, to keep them at a certain distance.

117. With one exception; which I have deep pleasure in remembering. In the first chapter of the Antiquary, the landlord at Queen's Ferry sets down to his esteemed guest a bottle of Robert Cockburn's best port; with which Robert Cockburn duly supplied Sir Walter himself, being at that time, if not the largest, the leading importer of the finest Portugal wine, as my father of Spanish. But Mr. Cockburn was primarily an old Edinburgh gentleman, and only by condescension a wine-merchant; a man of great power and pleasant sarcastic wit, moving in the first circles of Edinburgh; attached to my father by many links of association with the 'auld toun,' and sincerely respecting him. He was much the stateliest and truest piece of character who ever sate at our merchant feasts.

Mrs. Cockburn was even a little higher,—as representative of the Scottish lady of the old school,—indulgent yet to the new. She had been Lord Byron's first of first loves; she was the Mary Duff of Lachin-y-Gair. When I first remember her, still extremely beautiful in middle age, full of sense; and, though with some mixture of proud severity, extremely kind.

118. They had two sons, Alexander and Archibald, both in business with their father, both clever and energetic, but both distinctly resolute—as indeed their parents desired—that they would be gentlemen first, salesmen second: a character much to be honoured and retained among us; nor in their case the least ambitious or affected: gentlemen they were,—born so, and more at home on the hills than in the counting-house, and withal attentive enough to their business. The house, nevertheless, did not become all that it might have been in less well-bred hands.

The two sons, one or other, often dined with us, and were more distinctly friends than most of our guests. Alexander had much of his father's humour; Archibald, a fine, young,

dark Highlander, was extremely delightful to me, and took some pains with me, for the sake of my love of Scott, telling me anything about fishing or deer-stalking that I cared to listen to. For, even from earliest days, I cared to listen to the adventures of other people, though I never coveted any for myself. I read all Captain Marryat's novels, without ever wishing to go to sea; traversed the field of Waterloo without the slightest inclination to be a soldier; went on ideal fishing with Isaac Walton without ever casting a fly; and knew Cooper's 'Deerslayer' and 'Pathfinder' almost by heart, without handling anything but a pop-gun, or having any paths to find beyond the solitudes of Gipsy-Hill. I used sometimes to tell myself stories of campaigns in which I was an ingenious general, or caverns in which I discovered veins of gold; but these were merely to fill vacancies of fancy, and had no reference whatever to things actual or feasible. I already disliked growing older,—never expected to be wiser, and formed no more plans for the future than a little black silkworm does in the middle of its first mulberry leaf.

CHAPTER VI.

SCHAFFHAUSEN AND MILAN.

119. THE visit to the field of Waterloo, spoken of by chance in last chapter, must have been when I was five years old,—on the occasion of papa and mamma's taking a fancy to see Paris in its festivities following the coronation of Charles X. We stayed several weeks in Paris, in a quiet family inn, and then some days at Brussels,—but I have no memory whatever of intermediate stages. It seems to me, on revision of those matin times, that I was very slow in receiving impressions, and needed to stop two or three days at least in a place, before I began to get a notion of it; but the notion, once got, was, as far as it went, always right; and since I had no occasion afterwards to modify it, other impressions fell away from that principal one, and disappeared altogether. Hence what people call my prejudiced views of things,—which

are, in fact, the exact contrary, namely, post-judiced. (I do not mean to introduce this word for general service, but it saves time and print just now.)

120. Another character of my perceptions I find curiously steady—that I was only interested by things near me, or at least clearly visible and present. I suppose this is so with children generally; but it remained—and remains—a part of my grown-up temper. In this visit to Paris, I was extremely taken up with the soft red cushions of the arm-chairs, which it took one half an hour to subside into after sitting down,—with the exquisitely polished floor of the salon, and the good-natured French 'Boots' (more properly 'Brushes'), who skated over it in the morning till it became as reflective as a mahogany table,—with the pretty court full of flowers and shrubs in beds and tubs, between our rez-de-chaussée windows and the outer gate,—with a nice black servant belonging to another family, who used to catch the house-cat for me; and with an equally good-natured fille de chambre, who used to catch it back again, for fear I should teaze it, (her experience of English

boy-children having made her dubious of my intentions);—all these things and people I remember,—and the Tuileries garden, and the 'Tivoli' gardens, where my father took me up and down a 'Russian mountain,' and I saw fireworks of the finest. But I remember nothing of the Seine, nor of Notre Dame, nor of anything in or even out of the town, except the windmills on Mont Martre.

121. Similarly at Brussels. I recollect no Hotel de Ville, no stately streets, no surprises, or interests, except only the drive to Waterloo and slow walk over the field. The defacing mound was not then built—it was only nine years since the fight; and each bank and hollow of the ground was still a true exponent of the courses of charge or recoil. Fastened in my mind by later reading, that sight of the slope of battle remains to me entirely distinct, while the results of a later examination of it after the building of the mound, have faded mostly away.

I must also note that the rapture of getting on board a steamer, spoken of in last letter, was of later date; as a child I cared more for a beach on which the waves broke, or

sands in which I could dig, than for wide sea. There was no 'first sight' of the sea for me. I had gone to Scotland in Captain Spinks' cutter, then a regular passage boat, when I was only three years old; but the weather was fine, and except for the pleasure of tattooing myself with tar among the ropes, I might as well have been ashore; but I grew into the sense of ocean, as the Earth shaker, by the rattling beach, and lisping sand.

122. I had meant, also in this place, to give a word or two to another poor relative, Nanny Clowsley, an entirely cheerful old woman, who lived, with a Dutch clock and some old teacups, in a single room (with small bed in alcove) on the third storey of a gabled house, part of the group of old ones lately pulled down on Chelsea side of Battersea bridge. But I had better keep what I have to say of Chelsea well together, early and late; only, in speaking of shingle, I must note the use to me of the view out of Nanny Clowsley's window right down upon the Thames tide, with its tossing wherries at the flow, and stranded barges at ebb.

And now, I must get off, and come to the real first sights of several things.

123. I said that, for our English tours, Mr. Telford usually lent us his chariot. But for Switzerland, now taking Mary, we needed stronger wheels and more room; and for this, and all following tours abroad, the first preparation and the beginning of delight was the choosing a carriage to our fancy, from the hireable reserves at Mr. Hopkinson's, of Long Acre.

The poor modern slaves and simpletons who let themselves be dragged like cattle, or felled timber, through the countries they imagine themselves visiting, can have no conception whatever of the complex joys, and ingenious hopes, connected with the choice and arrangement of the travelling carriage in old times. The mechanical questions first, of strength—easy rolling—steady and safe poise of persons and luggage; the general stateliness of effect to be obtained for the abashing of plebeian beholders; the cunning design and distribution of store-cellars under the seats, secret drawers under front windows, invisible pockets under padded lining, safe

from dust, and accessible only by insidious slits, or necromantic valves like Aladdin's trap-door; the fitting of cushions where they would not slip, the rounding of corners for more delicate repose; the prudent attachments and springs of blinds; the perfect fitting of windows, on which one-half the comfort of a travelling carriage really depends; and the adaptation of all these concentrated luxuries to the probabilities of who would sit where, in the little apartment which was to be virtually one's home for five or six months; —all this was an imaginary journey in itself, with every pleasure, and none of the discomfort, of practical travelling.

124. On the grand occasion of our first continental journey—which was meant to be half a year long—the carriage was chosen with, or in addition fitted with, a front seat outside for my father and Mary, a dickey, unusually large, for Anne and the courier, and four inside seats, though those in front very small, that papa and Mary might be received inside in stress of weather. I recollect, when we had finally settled which carriage we would have, the polite Mr. Hopkinson,

advised of my dawning literary reputation, asking me (to the joy of my father) if I could translate the motto of the former possessor, under his painted arms,—"*Vix ea nostra voco*,"—which I accomplishing successfully, farther wittily observed that however by right belonging to the former possessor, the motto was with greater propriety applicable to *us*.

125. For a family carriage of this solid construction, with its luggage, and load of six or more persons, four horses were of course necessary to get any sufficient way on it; and half-a-dozen such teams were kept at every post-house. The modern reader may perhaps have as much difficulty in realizing these savagely and clumsily locomotive periods, though so recent, as any aspects of migratory Saxon or Goth; and may not think me vainly garrulous in their description.

The French horses, and more or less those on all the great lines of European travelling, were properly stout trotting cart-horses, well up to their work and over it; untrimmed, long-tailed, good-humouredly licentious, whinnying and frolicking with each

other when they had a chance; sagaciously steady to their work; obedient to the voice mostly, to the rein only for more explicitness; never touched by the whip, which was used merely to express the driver's exultation in himself and them,—signal obstructive vehicles in front out of the way, and advise all the inhabitants of the villages and towns traversed on the day's journey, that persons of distinction were honouring them by their transitory presence. If everything was right, the four horses were driven by one postillion riding the shaft horse; but if the horses were young, or the riders unpractised, there was a postillion for the leaders also. As a rule, there were four steady horses and a good driver, rarely drunk, often very young, the men of stronger build being more useful for other work, and any clever young rider able to manage the well-trained and merry-minded beasts, besides being lighter on their backs. Half the weight of the cavalier, in such cases, was in his boots, which were often brought out slung from the saddle like two buckets, the postillion, after the horses were harnessed, walking along the pole and getting into them.

126. Scarcely less official, for a traveling carriage of good class than its postillions, was the courier, or properly, avant-courier, whose primary office it was to ride in advance at a steady gallop, and order the horses at each post-house to be harnessed and ready waiting, so that no time might be lost between stages. His higher function was to make all bargains and pay all bills, so as to save the family unbecoming cares and mean anxieties, besides the trouble and disgrace of trying to speak French or any other foreign language. He, farther, knew the good inns in each town, and all the good rooms in each inn, so that he could write beforehand to secure those suited to his family. He was also, if an intelligent man and high-class courier, well acquainted with the proper sights to be seen in each town, and with all the occult means to be used for getting sight of those that weren't to be seen by the vulgar. Murray, the reader will remember, did not exist in those days; the courier was a private Murray, who knew, if he had any wit, not the things to be seen only, but those you would yourself best like to see, and gave instructions to your valet-de-place

accordingly, interfering only as a higher power in cases of difficulty needing to be overcome by money or tact. He invariably attended the ladies in their shopping expeditions, took them to the fashionable shops, and arranged as he thought proper the prices of articles. Lastly, he knew, of course, all the other high-class couriers on the road, and told you, if you wished to know, all the people of consideration who chanced to be with you in the inn.

127. My father would have considered it an insolent and revolutionary trespass on the privileges of the nobility to have mounted his courier to ride in advance of us; besides that, wisely liberal of his money for comfort and pleasure, he never would have paid the cost of an extra horse for show. The horses were, therefore, ordered in advance, when possible, by the postillions of any preceding carriage (or, otherwise, we did not mind waiting till they were harnessed), and we carried our courier behind us in the dickey with Anne, being in all his other functions and accomplishments an indispensable luxury to us. Indispensable, first, because none of us could

speak anything but French, and that only enough to ask our way in; for all specialties of bargaining, or details of information, we were helpless, even in France,—and might as well have been migratory sheep, or geese, in Switzerland or Italy. Indispensable, secondly, to my father's peace of mind, because, with perfect liberality of temper, he had a great dislike to being over-reached. He perfectly well knew that his courier would have his commission, and allowed it without question; but he knew also that his courier would not be cheated by other people, and was content in his representative. Not for ostentation, but for real enjoyment and change of sensation from his suburban life, my father liked large rooms; and my mother, in mere continuance of her ordinary and essential habits, liked clean ones; clean, and large, means a good inn and a first floor. Also my father liked a view from his windows, and reasonably said, "Why should we travel to see less than we may?"—so that meant first floor *front*. Also my father liked delicate cookery, just because he was one of the smallest and rarest eaters; and my mother liked good meat.

That meant, dinner without limiting price, in reason. Also, though my father never went into society, he all the more enjoyed getting a glimpse, reverentially, of fashionable people —I mean, people of rank,—he scorned fashion, and it was a great thing to him to feel that Lord and Lady —— were on the opposite landing, and that, at any moment, he might conceivably meet and pass them on the stairs. Salvador, duly advised, or penetratively perceptive of these dispositions of my father, entirely pleasing and admirable to the courier mind, had carte-blanche in all administrative functions and bargains. We found our pleasant rooms always ready, our good horses always waiting, everybody took their hats off when we arrived and departed. Salvador presented his accounts weekly, and they were settled without a word of demur.

128. To all these conditions of luxury and felicity, can the modern steam-puffed tourist conceive the added ruling and culminating one —that we were never in a hurry? coupled with the correlative power of always starting at the hour we chose, and that if we weren't ready, the horses would wait? As a rule, we

breakfasted at our own 'home time—eight; the horses were pawing and neighing at the door (under the archway, I should have said) by nine. Between nine and three,—reckoning seven miles an hour, including stoppages, for minimum pace,—we had done our forty to fifty miles of journey, sate down to dinner at four,—and I had two hours of delicious exploring by myself in the evening; ordered in punctually at seven to tea, and finishing my sketches till half-past nine,—bed-time.

On longer days of journey we started at six, and did twenty miles before breakfast, coming in for four o'clock dinner as usual. In a quite long day we made a second stop, dining at any nice village hostelry, and coming in for late tea, after doing our eighty or ninety miles. But these pushes were seldom made unless to get to some pleasant cathedral town for Sunday, or pleasant Alpine village. We never travelled on Sunday; my father and I nearly always went—as philosophers—to mass, in the' morning, and my mother, in pure good-nature to us, (I scarcely ever saw in her a trace of feminine curiosity,) would join with us in some such profanity as

a drive on the Corso, or the like, in the afternoon. But we all, even my father, liked a walk in the fields better, round an Alpine châlet village.

129. At page 110 I threatened more accurate note of my first impressions of Switzerland and Italy in 1833. Of customary Calais I have something to say later on,—here I note only our going up Rhine to Strasburg, where, with all its miracles of building, I was already wise enough to feel the cathedral stiff and iron-worky; but was greatly excited and impressed by the high roofs and rich fronts of the wooden houses, in their sudden indication of nearness to Switzerland; and especially by finding the scene so admirably expressed by Prout in the 36th plate of his Flanders and Germany, still uninjured. And then, with Salvador was held council in the inn-parlour of Strasburg, whether—it was then the Friday afternoon—we should push on to-morrow for our Sunday's rest to Basle, or to Schaffhausen.

130. How much depended—if ever anything 'depends' on anything else,—on the issue of that debate! Salvador inclined to

the straight and level Rhine-side road, with the luxury of the Three Kings attainable by sunset. But at Basle, it had to be admitted, there were no Alps in sight, no cataract within hearing, and Salvador honourably laid before us the splendid alternative possibility of reaching, by traverse of the hilly road of the Black Forest, the gates of Schaffhausen itself, before they closed for the night.

The Black Forest! The fall of Schaffhausen! The chain of the Alps! within one's grasp for Sunday! What a Sunday, instead of customary Walworth and the Dulwich fields! My impassioned petition at last carried it, and the earliest morning saw us trotting over the bridge of boats to Kehl, and in the eastern light I well remember watching the line of the Black Forest hills enlarge and rise, as we crossed the plain of the Rhine. "Gates of the hills"; opening for me to a new life—to cease no more, except at the Gates of the Hills whence one returns not.

131. And so, we reached the base of the Schwartzwald, and entered an ascending dingle; and scarcely, I think, a quarter of an hour

after entering, saw our first 'Swiss cottage.'* How much it meant to all of us,—how much prophesied to me, no modern traveller could the least conceive, if I spent days in trying to tell him. A sort of triumphant shriek—like all the railway whistles going off at once at Clapham Junction—has gone up from the Foeldom of Europe at the destruction of the myth of William Tell. To us, every word of it was true—but mythically luminous with more than mortal truth; and here, under the black woods, glowed the visible, beautiful, tangible testimony to it in the purple larch timber, carved to exquisiteness by the joy of peasant life, continuous, motionless there in the pine shadow on its ancestral tuff,—unassailed and unassailing, in the blessedness of righteous poverty, of religious peace.

The myth of William Tell is destroyed forsooth? and you have tunnelled Gothard, and filled, it may be, the Bay of Uri;—and it was all for you and your sake that the grapes dropped blood from the press of St. Jacob,

* Swiss, in character and real habit—the political boundaries are of no moment.

and the pine club struck down horse and helm in Morgarten Glen?

132. Difficult enough for you to imagine, that old travellers' time when Switzerland was yet the land of the Swiss, and the Alps had never been trod by foot of man. Steam, never heard of yet, but for short fair weather crossing at sea (were there paddle-packets across Atlantic? I forget). Any way, the roads by land were safe; and entered once into this mountain Paradise, we wound on through its balmy glens, past cottage after cottage on their lawns, still glistering in the dew.

The road got into more barren heights by the mid-day, the hills arduous; once or twice we had to wait for horses, and we were still twenty miles from Schaffhausen at sunset; it was past midnight when we reached her closed gates. The disturbed porter had the grace to open them—not quite wide enough; we carried away one of our lamps in collision with the slanting bar as we drove through the arch. How much happier the privilege of dreamily entering a mediæval city, though with the loss of a lamp, than the free ingress

of being jammed between a dray and a tram-car at a railroad station!

133. It is strange that I but dimly recollect the following morning; I fancy we must have gone to some sort of church or other; and certainly, part of the day went in admiring the bow-windows projecting into the clean streets. None of us seem to have thought the Alps would be visible without profane exertion in climbing hills. We dined at four, as usual, and the evening being entirely fine, went out to walk, all of us,—my father and mother and Mary and I.

We must have still spent some time in town-seeing, for it was drawing towards sunset when we got up to some sort of garden promenade—west of the town, I believe; and high above the Rhine, so as to command the open country across it to the south and west. At which open country of low undulation, far into blue,—gazing as at one of our own distances from Malvern of Worcestershire, or Dorking of Kent, — suddenly — behold — beyond!

134. There was no thought in any of us for a moment of their being clouds. They

were clear as crystal, sharp on the pure horizon sky, and already tinged with rose by the sinking sun. Infinitely beyond all that we had ever thought or dreamed—the seen walls of lost Eden could not have been more beautiful to us; not more awful, round heaven, the walls of sacred Death.

It is not possible to imagine, in any time of the world, a more blessed entrance into life, for a child of such a temperament as mine. True, the temperament belonged to the age: a very few years,—within the hundred,—before that, no child could have been born to care for mountains, or for the men that lived among them, in that way. Till Rousseau's time, there had been no 'sentimental' love of nature; and till Scott's, no such apprehensive love of 'all sorts and conditions of men,' not in the soul merely, but in the flesh. St. Bernard of La Fontaine, looking out to Mont Blanc with his child's eyes, sees above Mont Blanc the Madonna; St. Bernard of Talloires, not the Lake of Annecy, but the dead between Martigny and Aosta. But for me, the Alps and their people were alike beautiful in their snow, and their humanity;

and I wanted, neither for them nor myself, sight of any thrones in heaven, but the rocks, or of any spirits in heaven but the clouds.

135. Thus, in perfect health of life and fire of heart, not wanting to be anything but the boy I was, not wanting to have anything more than I had; knowing of sorrow only just so much as to make life serious to me, not enough to slacken in the least its sinews; and with so much of science mixed with feeling as to make the sight of the Alps not only the revelation of the beauty of the earth, but the opening of the first page of its volume,— I went down that evening from the garden-terrace of Schaffhausen with my destiny fixed in all of it that was to be sacred and useful. To that terrace, and the shore of the Lake of Geneva, my heart and faith return to this day, in every impulse that is yet nobly alive in them, and every thought that has in it help or peace.

136. The morning after that Sunday's eve at Schaffhausen was also cloudless, and we drove early to the falls, seeing again the chain of the Alps by morning light, and learning, at Lauffen, what an Alpine river was. Coming

out of the gorge of Balstall, I got another ever memorable sight of the chain of the Alps, and these distant views, never seen by the modern traveller, taught me, and made me feel, more than the close marvels of Thun and Interlachen. It was again fortunate that we took the grandest pass into Italy,—that the first ravine of the main Alps I saw was the Via Mala, and the first lake of Italy, Como.

We took boat on the little recessed lake of Chiavenna, and rowed down the whole way of waters, passing another Sunday at Cadenabbia, and then, from villa to villa, across the lake, and across, to Como, and so to Milan by Monza.

It was then full, though early, summer time; and the first impression of Italy always ought to be in her summer. It was also well that, though my heart was with the Swiss cottager, the artificial taste in me had been mainly formed by Turner's rendering of those very scenes, in Rogers' Italy. The 'Lake of Como,' the two moonlight villas, and the 'Farewell,' had prepared me for all that was beautiful and right in the terraced gardens, proportioned arcades, and white spaces of

sunny wall, which have in general no honest charm for the English mind. But to me, they were almost native through Turner,—familiar at once, and revered. I had no idea then of the Renaissance evil in them; they were associated only with what I had been told of the 'divine art' of Raphael and Lionardo, and, by my ignorance of dates, associated with the stories of Shakespeare. Portia's villa,—Juliet's palace,—I thought to have been like these.

Also, as noticed in the epilogue to reprint of vol. ii. of Modern Painters, I had always a quite true perception of size, whether in mountains or buildings, and with the perception, joy in it; so that the vastness of scale in the Milanese palaces, and the 'mount of marble, a hundred spires,' of the duomo, impressed me to the full at once: and not having yet the taste to discern good Gothic from bad, the mere richness and fineness of lace-like tracery against the sky was a consummate rapture to me—how much more getting up to it and climbing among it, with the Monte Rosa seen between its pinnacles across the plain!

137. I had been partly prepared for this view by the admirable presentment of it in London, a year or two before, in an exhibition, of which the vanishing has been in later life a greatly felt loss to me,—Burford's panorama in Leicester Square, which was an educational institution of the highest and purest value, and ought to have been supported by the Government as one of the most beneficial school instruments in London. There I had seen, exquisitely painted, the view from the roof of Milan Cathedral, when I had no hope of ever seeing the reality, but with a joy and wonder of the deepest;—and now to be there indeed, made deep wonder become fathomless.

Again, most fortunately, the weather was clear and cloudless all day long, and as the sun drew westward, we were able to drive to the Corso, where, at that time the higher Milanese were happy and proud as ours in their park, and whence, no railway station intervening, the whole chain of the Alps was visible on one side, and the beautiful city with its dominant frost-crystalline Duomo on the other. Then the drive home in the open

carriage through the quiet twilight, up the long streets, and round the base of the Duomo, the smooth pavement under the wheels adding with its silentness to the sense of dream wonder in it all,—the perfect air in absolute calm, the just seen majesty of encompassing Alps, the perfectness—so it seemed to me—and purity, of the sweet, stately, stainless marble against the sky. What more, what else, could be asked of seemingly immutable good, in this mutable world?

138. I wish in general to avoid interference with the reader's judgment on the matters which I endeavour serenely to narrate; but may, I think, here be pardoned for observing to him the advantage, in a certain way, of the contemplative abstraction from the world which, during this early continental travelling, was partly enforced by our ignorance, and partly secured by our love of comfort. There is something peculiarly delightful—nay, delightful inconceivably by the modern German-plated and French-polished tourist, in passing through the streets of a foreign city without understanding a word that anybody says! One's ear for all sound of voices then becomes

entirely impartial; one is not diverted by the meaning of syllables from recognizing the absolute guttural, liquid, or honeyed quality of them: while the gesture of the body and the expression of the face have the same value for you that they have in a pantomime; every scene becomes a melodious opera to you, or a picturesquely inarticulate Punch. Consider, also, the gain in so consistent tranquillity. Most young people nowadays, or even lively old ones, travel more in search of adventures than of information. One of my most valued records of recent wandering is a series of sketches by an amiable and extremely clever girl, of the things that happened to her people and herself every day that they were abroad. Here it is brother Harry, and there it is mamma, and now paterfamilias, and now her little graceful self, and anon her merry or remonstrant sisterhood, who meet with enchanting hardships, and enviable misadventures; bind themselves with fetters of friendship, and glance into sparklings of amourette, with any sort of people in conical hats and fringy caps: and it is all very delightful and condescending; and, of course, things are learnt

about the country that way which can be learned in no other way, but only about that part of it which interests itself in you, or which you have pleasure in being acquainted with. Virtually, you are thinking of yourself all the time; you necessarily talk to the cheerful people, not to the sad ones; and your head is for the most part vividly taken up with very little things. I don't say that our isolation was meritorious, or that people in general should know no language but their own. Yet the meek ignorance has these advantages. We did not travel for adventures, nor for company, but to see with our eyes, and to measure with our hearts. If you have sympathy, the aspect of humanity is more true to the depths of it than its words; and even in my own land, the things in which I have been least deceived are those which I have learned as their Spectator.

CHAPTER VII.

PAPA AND MAMMA.

139. THE work to which, as partly above described, I set myself during the year 1834 under the excitement remaining from my foreign travels, was in four distinct directions, in any one of which my strength might at that time have been fixed by definite encouragement. There was first the effort to express sentiment in rhyme; the sentiment being really genuine, under all the superficial vanities of its display; and the rhymes rhythmic, only without any ideas in them. It was impossible to explain, either to myself or other people, why I liked staring at the sea, or scampering on a moor; but, one had pleasure in making some sort of melodious noise about it, like the waves themselves, or the peewits. Then, secondly, there was the real love of engraving, and of such characters of surface and shade as it could give. I have never seen

drawing, by a youth, so entirely industrious in delicate line; and there was really the making of a fine landscape, or figure outline, engraver in me. But fate having ordered otherwise, I mourn the loss to engraving less than that before calculated, or rather incalculable, one, to geology! Then there was, thirdly, the violent instinct for architecture; but I never could have built or carved anything, because I was without power of design; and have perhaps done as much in that direction as it was worth doing with so limited faculty. And then, fourthly, there was the unabated, never to be abated, geological instinct, now fastened on the Alps. My fifteenth birthday gift being left to my choice, I asked for Saussure's 'Voyages dans les Alpes,' and thenceforward began progressive work, carrying on my mineralogical dictionary by the help of Jameson's three-volume Mineralogy, (an entirely clear and serviceable book;) comparing his descriptions with the minerals in the British Museum, and writing my own more eloquent and exhaustive accounts in a shorthand of many ingeniously symbolic characters, which it took me much longer to write

my descriptions in, than in common text, and which neither I nor anybody else could read a word of, afterwards.

140. Such being the quadrilateral plan of my fortifiable dispositions, it is time now to explain, with such clue as I have found to them, the somewhat peculiar character and genius of both my parents; the influence of which was more important upon me, then, and far on into life, than any external conditions, either of friendship or tutorship, whether at the University, or in the world.

It was, in the first place, a matter of essential weight in the determination of subsequent lines, not only of labour but of thought, that while my father, as before told, gave me the best example of emotional reading,—*reading*, observe, proper, not recitation, which he disdained, and I disliked,—my mother was both able to teach me, and resolved that I should learn, absolute accuracy of diction and precision of accent in prose; and made me know, as soon as I could speak plain, what I have in all later years tried to enforce on my readers, that accuracy of diction means accuracy of sensation, and precision of accent,

precision of feeling. Trained, herself in girlhood, only at Mrs. Rice's country school, my mother had there learned severely right principles of truth, charity, and housewifery, with punctilious respect for the purity of that English which in her home surroundings she perceived to be by no means as undefiled as the ripples of Wandel. She was the daughter, as aforesaid, of the early widowed landlady of the King's Head Inn and Tavern, which still exists, or existed a year or two since, presenting its side to Croydon market-place, its front and entrance door to the narrow alley which descends, steep for pedestrians, impassable to carriages, from the High Street to the lower town.

141. Thus native to the customs and dialect of Croydon Agora, my mother, as I now read her, must have been an extremely intelligent, admirably practical, and naïvely ambitious girl; keeping, without contention, the headship of her class, and availing herself with steady discretion of every advantage the country school and its modest mistress could offer her. I never in her after-life heard her speak with regret, and seldom without

respectful praise, of any part of the discipline of Mrs. Rice.

I do not know for what reason, or under what conditions, my mother went to live with my Scottish grandfather and grandmother, first at Edinburgh, and then at the house of Bower's Well, on the slope of the Hill of Kinnoul, above Perth. I was stupidly and heartlessly careless of the past history of my family as long as I could have learnt it; not till after my mother's death did I begin to desire to know what I could never more be told.

But certainly the change, for her, was into a higher sphere of society,—that of real, though sometimes eccentric, and frequently poor, gentlemen and gentlewomen. She must then have been rapidly growing into a tall, handsome, and very finely made girl, with a beautiful mild firmness of expression; a faultless and accomplished housekeeper, and a natural, essential, unassailable, yet inoffensive, prude. I never heard a single word of any sentiment, accident, admiration, or affection disturbing the serene tenor of her Scottish stewardship; yet I noticed that she never

spoke without some slight shyness before my father, nor without some pleasure, to other people, of Dr. Thomas Brown.

142. That the Professor of Moral Philosophy was a frequent guest at my grandmother's tea-table, and fond of benignantly arguing with Miss Margaret, is evidence enough of the position she held in Edinburgh circles; her household skills and duties never therefore neglected—rather, if anything, still too scrupulously practised. Once, when she had put her white frock on for dinner, and hurried to the kitchen to give final glance at the state and order of things there, old Mause, having run against the white frock with a black saucepan, and been, it seems, rebuked by her young mistress with too little resignation to the will of Providence in that matter, shook her head sorrowfully, saying, 'Ah, Miss Margaret, ye are just like Martha, carefu' and troubled about mony things.'

143. When my mother was thus, at twenty, in a Desdemona-like prime of womanhood, intent on highest moral philosophy,—"though still the house affairs would draw her thence"

—my father was a dark-eyed, brilliantly active, and sensitive, youth of sixteen. Margaret became to him an absolutely respected and admired—mildly liked—governess, and confidante. Her sympathy was necessary to him in all his flashingly transient amours; her advice in all domestic business or sorrow, and her encouragement in all his plans of life.

These were already determined for commerce;—yet not to the abandonment of liberal study. He had learned Latin thoroughly, though with no large range of reading, under the noble traditions of Adams at the High School of Edinburgh: while, by the then living and universal influence of Sir Walter, every scene of his native city was exalted in his imagination by the purest poetry, and the proudest history, that ever hallowed or haunted the streets and rocks of a brightly inhabited capital. I have neither space, nor wish, to extend my proposed account of things that have been, by records of correspondence;—it is too much the habit of modern biographers to confuse epistolary talk with vital fact. But the following letter from Dr.

Thomas Brown to my father, at this critical juncture of his life, must be read, in part as a testimony to the position he already held among the youths of Edinburgh, and yet more as explaining some points of his blended character, of the deepest significance afterwards, both to himself and to me.

144. "8, N. ST. DAVID'S STREET,
"EDINBURGH, *February 18th*, 1807.

"MY DEAR SIR,—When I look at the date of the letter which you did me the honour to send me as your adviser in literary matters —an office which a *proficient* like you scarcely requires—I am quite ashamed of the interval which I have suffered to elapse. I can truly assure you, however, that it has been unavoidable, and has not arisen from any want of interest in your intellectual progress. Even when you were a mere boy I was much delighted with your early zeal and attainments; and for your own sake, as well as for your excellent mother's, I have always looked to you with great regard, and with the belief that you would distinguish yourself in whatever profession you might adopt.

"You seem, I think, to repent too much the time you have devoted to the Belles Lettres. I confess I do not regret this for you. You must, I am sure, have felt the effect which such studies have in giving a general refinement to the manners and to the heart, which, to anyone who is not to be strictly a *man of science*, is the most valuable effect of literature. You must remember that there is a great difference between studying *professionally*, and studying for relaxation and ornament. In the society in which you are to mix, the writers in Belles Lettres will be mentioned fifty times, when more abstract science will not be mentioned once; and there is this great advantage in that sort of knowledge, that the display of it, unless very immoderate indeed, is not counted pedantry, when the display of other intellectual attainments might run some risk of the imputation. There is indeed one evil in the reading of poetry and other light productions, that it is apt to be indulged in to downright *gluttony*, and to occupy time which should be given to business; but I am sure I can rely on *you* that you will not so misapply your time. There

is, however, *one science*, the first and greatest of sciences to all men, and to merchants particularly—the science of Political Economy. To this I think your chief attention should be directed. It is in truth the science of your own profession, which counteracts the —(word lost with seal)—and narrow habits which that profession is sometimes apt to produce; and which is of perpetual appeal in every discussion on mercantile and financial affairs. A merchant well instructed in Political Economy must always be fit to lead the views of his brother merchants—without it, he is a mere trader. Do not lose a day, therefore, without providing yourself with a copy of Adam Smith's 'Wealth of Nations,' and read and re-read it with attention—as I am sure you must read it with delight. In giving you this advice I consider you as a *merchant*, for as that is to be your profession in life, your test of the importance of any acquirement should be how far it will tend to render you an *honourable and distinguished merchant*;—a character of no small estimation in this commercial country. I therefore consider the physical sciences as greatly

subordinate in relation to your prospects in life, and the society in which you will be called to mingle. All but chemistry require a greater preparation in mathematics than you probably have, and chemistry it is quite impossible to understand without some opportunity of seeing experiments systematically carried on. If, however, you have the opportunity to attend any of the lecturers on that science in London, it will be well worth your while, and in that case I think you should purchase either Dr. Thompson's or Mr. Murray's new system of chemistry, so as to keep up constantly with your lecturer. Even of physics in general it is pleasant to have some view, however superficial, and therefore though you cannot expect without mathematics to have anything but a superficial view, you had better try to attain it. With this view you may read Gregory's 'Economy of Nature,' which though not a good book, and not always accurate, is, I believe, the best popular book we have, and sufficiently accurate for your purposes. Remember, however, that though you may be permitted to be a superficial natural philosopher, no such

indulgence is to be given you in Political Economy.'

"The only other circumstance remaining for me to request of you is that you will not suffer yourself to lose any of the languages you have acquired. Of the modern languages there is less fear, as your mercantile communications will in some measure keep them alive; but merchants do not correspond in Latin, and you may perhaps lose it unconsciously. Independently, however, of the admirable writers of whom you would thus deprive yourself, and considering the language merely as the accomplishment of a gentleman, it is of too great value to be carelessly resigned.

"Farewell, my dear sir. Accept the regard of all this family, and believe me, with every wish to be of service to you,

"Your sincere friend,

"T. BROWN."

145. It may easily be conceived that a youth to whom such a letter as this was addressed by one of the chiefs of the purely intellectual circles of Edinburgh, would be

regarded with more respect by his Croydon cousin than is usually rendered by grown young women to their schoolboy friends.

Their frank, cousinly relation went on, however, without a thought on either side of any closer ties, until my father, at two or three and twenty, after various apprenticeship in London, was going finally to London to begin his career in his own business. By that time he had made up his mind that Margaret, though not the least an ideal heroine to him, was quite the best sort of person he could have for a wife, the rather as they were already so well used to each other; and in a quiet, but enough resolute way, asked her if she were of the same mind, and would wait until he had an independence to offer her. His early tutress consented with frankly confessed joy, not indeed in the Agnes Wickfield way, 'I have loved you all my life,' but feeling and admitting that it was great delight to be allowed to love him now. The relations between Grace Nugent and Lord Colambre in Miss Edgeworth's 'Absentee' extremely resemble those between my father and mother, except that Lord Colambre is a

more eager lover. My father chose his wife much with the same kind of serenity and decision with which afterwards he chose his clerks.

146. A time of active and hopeful contentment for both the young people followed, my mother being perhaps the more deeply in love, while John depended more absolutely on her sympathy and wise friendship than is at all usual with young men of the present day in their relations with admired young ladies. But neither of them ever permitted their feelings to degenerate into fretful or impatient passion. My mother showed her affection chiefly in steady endeavour to cultivate her powers of mind, and form her manners, so as to fit herself to be the undespised companion of a man whom she considered much her superior: my father in unremitting attention to the business on the success of which his marriage depended: and in a methodical regularity of conduct and correspondence which never left his mistress a moment of avoidable anxiety, or gave her motive for any serious displeasure.

On these terms the engagement lasted nine

years; at the end of which time, my grandfather's debts having been all paid, and my father established in a business gradually increasing, and liable to no grave contingency, the now not very young people were married in Perth one evening after supper, the servants of the house having no suspicion of the event until John and Margaret drove away together next morning to Edinburgh.

147. In looking back to my past thoughts and ways, nothing astonishes me more than my want of curiosity about all these matters; and that, often and often as my mother used to tell with complacency the story of this carefully secret marriage, I never asked, 'But, mother, why so secret, when it was just what all the friends of both of you so long expected, and what all your best friends so heartily wished?'

But, until lately, I never thought of writing any more about myself than was set down in diaries, nor of my family at all: and thus too carelessly, and, as I now think, profanely, neglected the traditions of my people. 'What does it all matter, now?' I said; 'we are what we are, and shall be what we make ourselves.'

Also, until very lately, I had accustomed myself to consider all that my parents had done, so far as their own happiness was concerned, entirely wise and exemplary. Yet the reader must not suppose that what I have said in my deliberate writings on the propriety of long engagements had any reference to this singular one in my own family. Of the heroism and patience with which the sacrifice was made, on both sides, I cannot judge:—but that it was greater than I should myself have been capable of, I know, and I believe that it was unwise. For during these years of waiting, my father fell gradually into a state of ill-health, from which he never entirely recovered; and in close of life, they both had to leave their child, just when he was beginning to satisfy the hopes they had formed for him.

148. I have allowed this tale of the little I knew of their early trials and virtues to be thus chance told, because I think my history will, in the end, be completest if I write as its connected subjects occur to me, and not with formal chronology of plan. My reason for telling it in this place was chiefly to explain

how my mother obtained her perfect skill in English reading, through the hard effort which, through the years of waiting, she made to efface the faults, and supply the defects, of her early education; effort which was aided and directed unerringly by her natural—for its intensity I might justly call it supernatural—purity of heart and conduct, leading her always to take most delight in the right and clear language which only can relate lovely things. Her unquestioning evangelical faith in the literal truth of the Bible placed me, as soon as I could conceive or think, in the presence of an unseen world; and set my active analytic power early to work on the questions of conscience, free will, and responsibility, which are easily determined in days of innocence; but are approached too often with prejudice, and always with disadvantage, after men become stupified by the opinions, or tainted by the sins, of the outer world: while the gloom, and even terror, with which the restrictions of the Sunday, and the doctrines of the Pilgrim's Progress, the Holy War, and Quarles' Emblems, oppressed the seventh part of my time, was

useful to me as the only form of vexation which I was called on to endure; and redeemed by the otherwise uninterrupted cheerfulness and tranquillity of a household wherein the common ways were all of pleasantness, and its single and strait path, of perfect peace.

149. My father's failure of health, following necessarily on the long years of responsibility and exertion, needed only this repose to effect its cure. Shy to an extreme degree in general company, all the more because he had natural powers which he was unable to his own satisfaction to express,—his business faculty was entirely superb and easy: he gave his full energy to counting-house work in the morning, and his afternoons to domestic rest. With instant perception and decision in all business questions; with principles of dealing which admitted of no infraction, and involved neither anxiety nor concealment, the counting-house work was more of an interest, or even an amusement, to him, than a care. His capital was either in the Bank, or in St. Catherine's Docks, in the form of insured butts of the finest sherry in the world; his

partner, Mr. Domecq, a Spaniard as proud as himself, as honourable, and having perfect trust in him,—not only in his probity, but his judgment,—accurately complying with all his directions in the preparation of wine for the English market, and no less anxious than he to make every variety of it, in its several rank, incomparably good. The letters to Spain therefore needed only brief statement that the public of that year wanted their wine young or old, pale or brown, and the like; and the letters to customers were as brief in their assurances that if they found fault with their wine, they did not understand it, and if they wanted an extension of credit, they could not have it. These Spartan brevities of epistle were, however, always supported by the utmost care in executing his correspondents' orders; and by the unusual attention shown them in travelling for those orders himself, instead of sending an agent or a clerk. His domiciliary visits of this kind were always conducted by him with great *savoir faire* and pleasant courtesy, no less than the most attentive patience: and they were productive of the more confidence

between him and the country merchant, that he was perfectly just and candid in appraisement of the wine of rival houses, while his fine palate enabled him always to sustain triumphantly any and every ordeal of blindfold question which the suspicious customer might put him to. Also, when correspondents of importance came up to town, my father would put himself so far out of his way as to ask them to dine at Herne Hill, and try the contents of his own cellar. These London visits fell into groups, on any occasions in the metropolis of interest more than usual to the provincial mind. Our business dinners were then arranged so as to collect two or three country visitors together, and the table made symmetrical by selections from the house's customers in London, whose conversation might be most instructive to its rural friends.

Very early in my boy's life I began much to dislike these commercial feasts, and to form, by carefully attending to their dialogue, when it chanced to turn on any other subject than wine, an extremely low estimate of the commercial mind as such;—estimate which

I have never had the slightest reason to alter.

Of our neighbours on Herne Hill we saw nothing, with one exception only, afterwards to be noticed. They were for the most part well-to-do London tradesmen of the better class, who had little sympathy with my mother's old-fashioned ways, and none with my father's romantic sentiment.

150. There was probably the farther reason for our declining the intimacy of our immediate neighbours, that most of them were far more wealthy than we, and inclined to demonstrate their wealth by the magnificence of their establishments. My parents lived with strict economy, kept only female servants,* used only tallow candles in plated candlesticks, were content with the leasehold territory of their front and back gardens,—scarce an acre altogether,—and kept neither horse nor carriage. Our shop-keeping neighbours, on the contrary, had usually great cortège of footmen and glitter of plate, extensive

* Thomas left us, I think partly in shame for my permanently injured lip; and we never had another indoor manservant

pleasure grounds, costly hot-houses, and carriages driven by coachmen in wigs. It may be perhaps doubted by some of my readers whether the coldness of acquaintanceship was altogether on our side; but assuredly my father was too proud to join entertainments for which he could give no like return, and my mother did not care to leave her card on foot at the doors of ladies who dashed up to hers in their barouche.

151. Protected by these monastic severities and aristocratic dignities, from the snares and disturbances of the outer world, the routine of my childish days became fixed, as of the sunrise and sunset to a nestling. It may seem singular to many of my readers that I remember with most pleasure the time when it was most regular and most solitary. The entrance of my cousin Mary into our household was coincident with the introduction of masters above described, and with other changes in the aims and employments of the day, which, while they often increased its interest, disturbed its tranquillity. The ideas of success at school or college, put before me by my masters, were ignoble and comfortless,

in comparison with my mother's regretful blame, or simple praise: and Mary, though of a mildly cheerful and entirely amiable disposition, necessarily touched the household heart with the sadness of her orphanage, and something interrupted its harmony by the difference, which my mother could not help showing, between the feelings with which she regarded her niece and her child

152. And although I have dwelt with thankfulness on the many joys and advantages of these secluded years, the vigilant reader will not, I hope, have interpreted the accounts rendered of them into general praise of a like home education in the environs of London. But one farther good there was in it, hitherto unspoken; that great part of my acute perception and deep feeling of the beauty of architecture and scenery abroad, was owing to the well-formed habit of narrowing myself to happiness within the four brick walls of our fifty by one hundred yards of garden; and accepting with resignation the æsthetic external surroundings of a London suburb, and, yet more, of a London chapel. For Dr. Andrews' was the Londonian chapel in

its perfect type, definable as accurately as a Roman basilica,—an oblong, flat-ceiled barn, lighted by windows with semi-circular heads, brick-arched, filled by small-paned glass held by iron bars, like fine threaded halves of cobwebs; galleries propped on iron pipes, up both sides; pews, well shut in, each of them, by partitions of plain deal, and neatly brass-latched deal doors, filling the barn floor, all but its two lateral straw-matted passages, pulpit, sublimely isolated, central from sides and clear of altar rails at end; a stout, four-legged box of well-grained wainscot, high as the level of front galleries, and decorated with a cushion of crimson velvet, padded six inches thick, with gold tassels at the corners; which was a great resource to me when I was tired of the sermon, because I liked watching the rich colour of the folds and creases that came in it when the clergyman thumped it.

153. Imagine the change between one Sunday and the next,—from the morning service in this building, attended by the families of the small shopkeepers of the Walworth Road, in their Sunday trimmings; (our plumber's wife, fat, good, sensible Mrs Goad,

sat in the next pew in front of us, sternly sensitive to the interruption of her devotion by our late arrivals); fancy the change from this, to high mass in Rouen Cathedral, its nave filled by the white-capped peasantry of half Normandy!

Nor was the contrast less enchanting or marvellous between the street architecture familiar to my eyes, and that of Flanders and Italy, as an exposition of mercantile taste and power. My father's counting-house was in the centre of Billiter Street, some years since effaced from sight and memory of men, but a type, then, of English city state in perfection. We now build house fronts as advertisements, spending a hundred thousand pounds in the lying mask of our bankruptcies. But in my father's time both trade and building were still honest. His counting-house was a room about fifteen feet by twenty, including desks for two clerks, and a small cupboard for sherry samples, on the first floor, with a larger room opposite for private polite receptions of elegant visitors, or the serving of a chop for himself if he had to stay late in town. The ground floor was

occupied by friendly Messrs. Wardell and Co., a bustling retail firm, I believe. The only advertisement of the place of business was the brass plate under the bell-handle, inscribed 'Ruskin, Telford, and Domecq,' brightly scrubbed by the single female servant in charge of the establishment, old Maisie,—abbreviated or tenderly diminished into the 'sie,' from I know not what Christian name—Marion, I believe, as Mary into Mause. The whole house, three-storied, with garrets, was under her authority, with, doubtless, assistant morning charwoman,—cooking, waiting, and answering the door to distinguished visitors, all done by Maisie, the visitors being expected of course to announce themselves by the knocker with a flourish in proportion to their eminence in society. The business men rang the counting-house bell aforesaid, (round which the many coats of annual paint were cut into a beautiful slant section by daily scrubbing, like the coats of an agate;) and were admitted by lifting of latch, manipulated by the head clerk's hand in the counting-house, without stirring from his seat.

154. This unpretending establishment, as

I said, formed part of the western side of Billiter Street, a narrow trench—it may have been thirty feet wide—admitting, with careful and precise driving, the passing each other of two brewers' drays. I am not sure that this was possible at the ends of the street, but only at a slight enlargement opposite the brewery in the middle. Effectively a mere trench between three-storied houses of prodigious brickwork, thoroughly well laid, and presenting no farther entertainment whatever to the æsthetic beholder than the alternation of the ends and sides of their beautifully level close courses of bricks, and the practised and skilful radiation of those which formed the window lintels.

Typical, I repeat, of the group of London edifices, east of the Mansion House, and extending to the Tower; the under-hill picturesquenesses of which, however, were in early days an entirely forbidden district to me, lest I should tumble into the docks; but Fenchurch and Leadenhall Streets, familiar to me as the perfection of British mercantile state and grandeur,—the reader may by effort, though still dimly, conceive the effect on my

imagination of the fantastic gables of Ghent, and orange-scented cortiles of Genoa.

155. I can scarcely account to myself, on any of the ordinary principles of resignation, for the undimmed tranquillity of pleasure with which, after these infinite excitements in foreign lands, my father would return to his desk opposite the brick wall of the brewery, and I to my niche behind the drawing-room chimney piece. But to both of us, the steady occupations, the beloved samenesses, and the sacred customs of home were more precious than all the fervours of wonder in things new to us, or delight in scenes of incomparable beauty. Very early, indeed, I had found that novelty was soon exhausted, and beauty, though inexhaustible, beyond a certain point or time of enthusiasm, no more to be enjoyed; but it is not so often observed by philosophers that home, healthily organized, is always enjoyable; nay, the sick thrill of pleasure through all the brain and heart with which, after even so much as a month or two of absence, I used to catch the first sight of the ridge of Herne Hill, and watch for every turn of the well-known road and every branch of

the familiar trees, was—though not so deep or overwhelming—more intimately and vitally powerful than the brightest passions of joy in strange lands, or even in the unaccustomed scenery of my own. To my mother, her ordinary household cares, her reading with Mary and me, her chance of a chat with Mrs. Gray, and the unperturbed preparation for my father's return, and for the quiet evening, were more than all the splendours or wonders of the globe between poles and equator.

156. Thus we returned—full of new thoughts, and faithful to the old, to this exulting rest of home in the close of 1833. An unforeseen shadow was in the heaven of its charmed horizon.

Every day at Cornhill, Charles became more delightful and satisfactory to everybody who knew him. How a boy living all day in London could keep so bright a complexion, and so crisply Achillean curls of hair—and all the gay spirit of his Croydon mother—was not easily conceivable; but he became a perfect combination of the sparkle of Jin Vin with the steadiness of Tunstall, and was untroubled by the charms of any unattainable

Margaret, for his master had no daughter; but, as wise chance would have it, a son: so that looking forward to possibilities as a rising apprentice ought, Charles saw that there were none in the house for him beyond the place of cashier, or perhaps only head-clerk. His elder brother, who had taught him to swim by throwing him into Croydon canal, was getting on fast as a general trader in Australia, and naturally longed to have his best-loved brother there for a partner. Bref, it was resolved that Charles should go to Australia. The Christmas time of 1833 passed heavily, for I was very sorry; Mary, a good deal more so: and my father and mother, though in their hearts caring for nobody in the world but me, were grave at the thought of Charles's going so far away; but, honestly and justifiably, thought it for the lad's good. I think the whole affair was decided, and Charles's outfit furnished, and ship's berth settled, and ship's captain interested in his favour, in something less than a fortnight, and down he went to Portsmouth to join his ship joyfully, with the world to win. By due post came the news that he was at anchor off

Cowes, but that the ship could not sail because of the west wind. And post succeeded post, and still the west wind blew. We liked the west wind for its own sake, but it was a prolonging of farewell which teazed us, though Charles wrote that he was enjoying himself immensely, and the captain, that he had made friends with every sailor on board, besides the passengers.

157. And still the west wind blew. I do not remember how long—some ten days or fortnight, I believe. At last, one day my mother and Mary went with my father into town on some shopping or sight-seeing business of a cheerful character; and I was left at home, busy also about something that cheered me greatly, I know not what; but when I heard the others come in, and upstairs into the drawing-room, I ran eagerly down and into the room, beginning to tell them about this felicity that had befallen me, whatever it was. They all stood like statues, my father and mother very grave. Mary was looking out of the window—the farthest of the front three from the door. As I went on, boasting of myself, she turned round

suddenly, her face all streaming with tears, and caught hold of me, and put her face close to mine, that I might hear the sobbing whisper, 'Charles is gone.'

158. The west wind had still blown, clearly and strong, and the day before there had been a fresh breeze of it round the isle, at Spithead, exactly the kind of breeze that drifts the clouds, and ridges the waves, in Turner's Gosport.

The ship was sending her boat on shore for some water, or the like—her little cutter, or somehow sailing, boat. There was a heavy sea running, and the sailors, and, I believe, also a passenger or two, had some difficulty in getting on board. 'May I go, too?' said Charles to the captain, as he stood seeing them down the side. 'Are you not afraid?' said the captain. 'I never was afraid of anything in my life,' said Charles, and went down the side and leaped in.

The boat had not got fifty yards from the ship before she went over, but there were other boats sailing all about them, like gnats in midsummer. Two or three scudded to the spot in a minute, and every soul was

saved, except Charles, who went down like a stone.

22nd January, 1834.

All this we knew by little and little. For the first day or two we would not believe it, but thought he must have been taken up by some other boat and carried to sea. At last came word that his body had been thrown ashore at Cowes: and his father went down to see him buried. That done, and all the story heard, for still the ship stayed, he came to Herne Hill, to tell Charles's 'auntie' all about it. (The old man never called my mother anything else than auntie.) It was in the morning, in the front parlour—my mother knitting in her usual place at the fire-side, I at my drawing, or the like, in my own place also. My uncle told all the story, in the quiet, steady sort of way that the common English do, till just at the end he broke down into sobbing, saying (I can hear the words now), 'They caught the cap off of his head, and yet they couldn't save him.'

CHAPTER VIII.

VESTER, CAMENAE.

159. THE death of Charles closed the doors of my heart again for that time; and the self-engrossed quiet of the Herne Hill life continued for another year, leaving little to be remembered, and less to be told. My parents made one effort, however, to obtain some healthy companionship for me, to which I probably owe more than I knew at the moment.

Some six or seven gates down the hill towards the field, (which I have to return most true thanks to its present owner, Mr. Sopper, for having again opened to the public sight in consequence of the passage above describing the greatness of its loss both to the neighbour and the stranger), some six or seven gates down that way, a pretty lawn, shaded by a low spreading cedar, opened before an extremely neat and carefully kept

house, where lived two people, modest in their ways as my father and mother themselves,—Mr. and Mrs. Fall; happier, however, in having son and daughter instead of an only child. Their son, Richard, was a year younger than I, but already at school at Shrewsbury, and somewhat in advance of me therefore in regular discipline; extremely gentle and good-natured, — his sister, still younger, a clever little girl, her mother's constant companion: and both of them unpretending, but rigid, examples of all Herne Hill proprieties, true religions, and useful learnings. I shudder still at the recollection of Mrs. Fall's raised eyebrows one day at my pronunciation of 'naiveté' as 'naivette.'

160. I think it must have been as early as 1832 that my father, noticing with great respect the conduct of all matters in this family, wrote to Mr. Fall in courteous request that 'the two boys' might be permitted, when Richard was at home, to pursue their holiday tasks, or recreations, so far as it pleased them, together. The proposal was kindly taken: the two boys took stock of each other,—

agreed to the arrangement,—and, as I had been promoted by that time to the possession of a study, all to myself, while Richard had only his own room, (and *that* liable to sisterly advice or intrusion,) the course which things fell into was that usually, when Richard was at home, he came up past the seven gates about ten in the morning; did what lessons he had to do at the same table with me, occasionally helping me a little with mine; and then we went together for afternoon walk with Dash, Gipsy, or whatever dog chanced to be dominant.

101. I do not venture to affirm that the snow of those Christmas holidays was whiter than it is now, though I might give some reasons for supposing that it remained longer white. But I affirm decisively that it used to fall deeper in the neighbourhood of London than has been seen for the last twenty or twenty-five years. It was quite usual to find in the hollows of the Norwood Hill the field fences buried under crested waves of snow, while, from the higher ridges, half the counties of Kent and Surrey shone to the horizon like a cloudless and terrorless Arctic sea.

Richard Fall was entirely good-humoured, sensible, and practical; but had no particular tastes; a distaste, if anything, for *my* styles both of art and poetry. He stiffly declined arbitration on the merits of my compositions; and though with pleasant cordiality in daily companionship, took rather the position of putting up with me, than of pride in his privilege of acquaintance with a rising author. He was never unkind or sarcastic; but laughed me inexorably out of writing bad English for rhyme's sake, or demonstrable nonsense either in prose or rhyme. We got gradually accustomed to be together, and far on into life were glad when any chance brought us together again.

162. The year 1834 passed innocuously enough, but with little profit, in the quadripartite industries before described, followed for my own pleasure — with minglings of sapless effort in the classics, in which I neither felt, nor foresaw, the least good.

Innocuously *enough*, I say,—meaning, with as little mischief as a well-intentioned boy, virtually masterless, could suffer from having all his own way, and daily confirming his self

in the serious impression that his own way was always the best.

I cannot analyse, at least without taking more trouble than I suppose any reader would care to take with me, the mixed good and evil in the third rate literature which I preferred to the Latin classics. My volume of the Forget-me-not, which gave me that precious engraving of Verona, (curiously also another by Prout of St. Mark's at Venice), was somewhat above the general caste of annuals in its quality of letterpress; and contained three stories, 'The Red-nosed Lieutenant,' by the Rev. George Croly; 'Hans in Kelder,' by the author of 'Chronicles of London Bridge;' and 'The Comet,' by Henry Neele, Esq., which were in their several ways extremely impressive to me. The partly childish, partly dull, or even, as aforesaid, idiotic, way I had of staring at the same things all day long, carried itself out in reading, so that I could read the same things all the year round. As there was neither advantage nor credit to be got by remembering fictitious circumstances, I was, if anything, rather proud of my skill in forgetting, so as the sooner to recover

the zest of the tales; and I suppose these favourites, and a good many less important ones of the sort, were read some twenty times a year, during the earlier epoch of teens.

163. I wonder a little at my having been allowed so long to sit in that drawing-room corner with only my Rogers' Italy, my Forget-me-not, the Continental Annual, and Friendships' Offering, for my working library; and I wonder a little more that my father, in his passionate hope that I might one day write like Byron, never noticed that Byron's early power was founded on a course of general reading of the masters in every walk of literature, such as is, I think, utterly unparalleled in any other young life, whether of student or author. But I was entirely incapable of such brain-work, and the real gift I had in drawing involved the use in its practice of the best energy of the day. Hans in Kelder, and The Comet, were my manner of rest.

I do not know when my father first began to read Byron to me, with any expectation of my liking him; all primary training, after the

Iliad, having been in Scott; but it must have been about the beginning of the teen period, else I should recollect the first effect of it. Manfred evidently, I had got at, like Macbeth, for the sake of the witches. Various questionable changes were made, however, at that
1831 turning of twelve, in the Hermitage discipline of Herne Hill. I was allowed to taste wine; taken to the theatre; and, on festive days, even dined with my father and mother at four: and it was then generally at dessert that my father would read any otherwise suspected delight: the Noctes Ambrosianæ regularly when they came out—without the least missing of the naughty words; and at last, the shipwreck in Don Juan,—of which, finding me rightly appreciative, my father went on with nearly all the rest. I recollect that he and my mother looked across the table at each other with something of alarm, when, on asking me a few festas afterwards what we should have for after dinner reading, I instantly answered 'Juan and Haidée.' My selection was not adopted, and, feeling there was something wrong somewhere, I did not press it, attempting even some stutter of

apology which made matters worse. Perhaps I was given a bit of Childe Harold instead, which I liked at that time nearly as well; and, indeed, the story of Haidée soon became too sad for me. But very certainly, by the end of this year 1834, I knew my Byron pretty well all through, all but Cain, Werner, the Deformed Transformed, and Vision of Judgment, none of which I could understand, nor did papa and mamma think it would be well I should try to.

164. The ingenuous reader may perhaps be so much surprised that mamma fell in with all this, that it becomes here needful to mark for him some peculiarities in my mother's prudery which he could not discover for himself, from anything hitherto told of her. He might indeed guess that, after taking me at least six times straight through the Bible, she was not afraid of plain words to, or for, me; but might not feel that in the energy and affectionateness of her character, she had as much sympathy with all that is noble and beautiful in Byron as my father himself; nor that her Puritanism was clear enough in common sense to see that, while Shakespeare

and Burns lay open on the table all day, there was no reason for much mystery with Byron (though until later I was not allowed to read him for myself). She had trust in my disposition and education, and was no more afraid of my turning out a Corsair or a Giaour than a Richard III., or a——Solomon. And she was perfectly right, so far. I never got the slightest harm from Byron: what harm came to me was from the facts of life, and from books of a baser kind, including a wide range of the works of authors popularly considered extremely instructive — from Victor Hugo down to Doctor Watts.

165. Farther, I will take leave to explain in this place what I meant by saying that my mother was an 'inoffensive' prude. She was herself as strict as Alice Bridgenorth; but she understood the doctrine of the religion she had learnt, and, without ostentatiously calling herself a miserable sinner, knew that according to that doctrine, and probably in fact, Madge Wildfire was no worse a sinner than she. She was like her sister in universal charity—had sympathy with every passion, as well as every virtue, of true womanhood;

and, in her heart of hearts, perhaps liked the real Margherita Cogni quite as well as the ideal wife of Faliero.

166. And there was one more feature in my mother's character which must be here asserted at once, to put an end to the notion of which I see traces in some newspaper comments on my past descriptions of her, that she was in any wise like Esther's religious aunt in Bleak House. Far on the contrary, there was a hearty, frank, and sometimes even irrepressible, laugh in my mother! Never sardonic, yet with a very definitely Smollettesque turn in it! so that, between themselves, she and my father enjoyed their Humphrey Clinker extremely, long before *I* was able to understand either the jest or gist of it. Much more, she could exult in a harmless bit of Smollettesque reality. Years and years after this time, in one of our crossings of the Simplon, just at the top, where we had stopped to look about us, Nurse Anne sat down to rest herself on the railings at the roadside, just in front of the monastery;—the off roadside, from which the bank slopes steeply down outside the fence. Turning to observe the panoramic

picturesque, Anne lost her balance, and went backwards over the railings down the bank. My father could not help suggesting that she had done it expressly for the entertainment of the Holy Fathers; and neither he nor my mother could ever speak of the 'performance' (as they called it) afterwards, without laughing for a quarter of an hour.

167. If, however, there was the least bitterness or irony in a jest, my mother did not like it; but my father and I liked it all the more, if it were just; and, so far as I could understand it, I rejoiced in all the sarcasm of Don Juan. But my firm decision, as soon as I got well into the later cantos of it, that Byron was to be my master in verse, as Turner in colour, was made of course in that gosling (or say cygnet) epoch of existence, without consciousness of the deeper instincts that prompted it: only two things I consciously recognized, that his truth of observation was the most exact, and his chosen expression the most concentrated, that I had yet found in literature. By that time my father had himself put me through the two first books of Livy, and I knew, therefore, what close-set

language was; but I saw then that Livy, as afterwards that Horace and Tacitus, were studiously, often laboriously, and sometimes obscurely, concentrated: while Byron wrote, as easily as a hawk flies, and as clearly as a lake reflects, the exact truth in the precisely narrowest terms; nor only the exact truth, but the most central and useful one.

168. Of course I could no more measure Byron's greater powers at that time than I could Turner's; but I saw that both were right in all things that *I* knew right from wrong in; and that they must thenceforth be my masters, each in his own domain. The modern reader, not to say also, modern scholar, is usually so ignorant of the essential qualities of Byron, that I cannot go farther in the story of my own novitiate under him without illustrating, by rapid example, the things which I saw to be unrivalled in his work.

For this purpose I take his common prose, rather than his verse, since his modes of rhythm involve other questions than those with which I am now concerned. Read, for chance-first, the sentence on Sheridan, in his letter to Thomas Moore, from Venice, June

1st (or dawn of June 2nd!), 1818. 'The Whigs abuse him; however, he never left them, and such blunderers deserve neither credit nor compassion. As for his creditors —remember Sheridan never had a shilling, and was thrown, with great powers and passions, into the thick of the world, and placed upon the pinnacle of success, with no other external means to support him in his elevation. Did Fox pay *his* debts? or did Sheridan take a subscription? Was ——'s drunkenness more excusable than his? Were his intrigues more notorious than those of all his contemporaries? and is his memory to be blasted and theirs respected? Don't let yourself be led away by clamour, but compare him with the coalitioner Fox, and the pensioner Burke, as a man of principle; and with ten hundred thousand in personal views; and with none in talent, for he beat them all out and out. Without means, without connection, without character (which might be false at first, and drive him mad afterwards from desperation), he beat them all, in all he ever attempted. But, alas poor human nature! Good-night, or rather morning. It is four,

and the dawn gleams over the Grand Canal, and unshadows the Rialto.'

169. Now, observe, that passage is noble, primarily because it contains the utmost number that will come together into the space, of absolutely just, wise, and kind thoughts. But it is more than noble, it is *perfect*, because the quantity it holds is not artificially or intricately concentrated, but with the serene swiftness of a smith's hammer-strokes on hot iron; and with choice of terms which, each in its place, will convey far more than they mean in the dictionary. Thus, 'however' is used instead of 'yet,' because it stands for 'howsoever,' or, in full, for 'yet whatever they did.' 'Thick' of society, because it means, not merely the crowd, but the *fog* of it; 'ten hundred thousand' instead of 'a million,' or 'a thousand thousand,' to take the sublimity out of the number, and make us feel that it is a number of nobodies. Then the sentence in parenthesis, 'which might be false,' etc., is indeed obscure, because it was impossible to clarify it without a regular pause, and much loss of time; and the reader's sense is therefore left to expand it for himself into

'it was, perhaps, falsely said of him at first, that he had no character,' etc. Finally, the dawn 'unshadows'—lessens the shadow on—the Rialto, but does not *gleam* on that, as on the broad water.

170. Next, take the two sentences on poetry, in his letters to Murray of September 15th, 1817, and April 12th, 1818; (for the collected force of these compare the deliberate published statement in the answer to Blackwood in 1820.)

1817. 'With regard to poetry in general, I am convinced, the more I think of it, that he (Moore), and *all* of us—Scott, Southey, Wordsworth, Moore, Campbell, I,—are all in the wrong, one as much as another; that we are upon a wrong revolutionary poetical system, or systems, not worth a damn in itself, and from which none but Rogers and Crabbe are free: and that the present and next generations will finally be of this opinion. I am the more confirmed in this by having lately gone over some of our classics, particularly Pope, whom I tried in this way: I took Moore's poems, and my own, and some others, and went over them side by side with Pope's,

and I was really astonished (I ought not to have been so) and mortified, at the ineffable distance in point of sense, learning, effect, and even *imagination*, passion, and *invention*, between the little Queen Anne's man, and us of the Lower Empire. Depend upon it, it is all Horace then, and Claudian now, among us; and if I had to begin again, I would mould myself accordingly. Crabbe's the man; but he has got a coarse and impracticable subject, and . . . is retired upon half-pay, and has done enough, unless he were to do as he did formerly.'

1818. 'I thought of a preface, defending Lord Hervey against Pope's attack, but Pope —quoad Pope, the poet,—against all the world, in the unjustifiable attempts begun by Warton, and carried on at this day by the new school of critics and scribblers, who think themselves poets because they do *not* write like Pope. I have no patience with such cursed humbug and bad taste; your whole generation are not worth a canto of the Rape of the Lock, or the Essay on Man, or the Dunciad, or "anything that is his."'

171. There is nothing which needs explanation in the brevities and amenities of these two fragments, except, in the first of them, the distinctive and exhaustive enumeration of the qualities of great poetry,—and note especially the order in which he puts these.

A. Sense. That is to say, the first thing you have to think of is whether the would-be poet is a wise man—so also in the answer to Blackwood, 'They call him (Pope) the poet of reason!—is that any reason why he should not be a poet?'

B. Learning. The Ayrshire ploughman may have good gifts, but he is out of court with relation to Homer, or Dante, or Milton.

C. Effect. Has he *efficiency* in his verse?—does it tell on the ear and the spirit in an instant? See the 'effect' on her audience of Beatrice's 'ottave,' in the story at p. 286 of Miss Alexander's Songs of Tuscany

D. Imagination. Put thus low because many novelists and artists have this faculty, yet are not poets, or even good novelists or painters; because they have not sense to manage it, nor the art to give it effect.

E. Passion. Lower yet, because all good men and women have as much as either they or the poet ought to have.

F. Invention. And this lowest, because one may be a good poet without having this at all. Byron had scarcely any himself, while Scott had any quantity—yet never could write a play.

172. But neither the force and precision, nor the rhythm, of Byron's language, were at all the central reasons for my taking him for master. Knowing the Song of Moses and the Sermon on the Mount by heart, and half the Apocalypse besides, I was in no need of tutorship either in the majesty or simplicity of English words; and for their logical arrangement, I had had Byron's own master, Pope, since I could lisp. But the thing wholly new and precious to me in Byron was his measured and living *truth*—measured as compared with Homer; and living, as compared with everybody else. My own inexorable measuring wand,—not enchanter's, but cloth-worker's and builder's,—reduced to mere incredibility all the statements of the poets usually called sublime. It was of no use for

Homer to tell me that Pelion was put on the top of Ossa. I knew perfectly well it wouldn't go on the top of Ossa. Of no use for Pope to tell me that trees where his mistress looked would crowd into a shade, because I was satisfied that they would do nothing of the sort. Nay, the whole world, as it was described to me either by poetry or theology, was every hour becoming more and more shadowy and impossible. I rejoiced in all stories of Pallas and Venus, of Achilles and Eneas, of Elijah and St. John: but, without doubting in my heart that there were real spirits of wisdom and beauty, nor that there had been invincible heroes and inspired prophets, I felt already, with fatal and increasing sadness, that there was no clear utterance about any of them—that there were for *me* neither Goddess guides nor prophetic teachers; and that the poetical histories, whether of this world or the next, were to me as the words of Peter to the shut up disciples—'as idle tales; and they believed them not.'

173. But here at last I had found a man who spoke only of what he had seen, and known; and spoke without exaggeration,

without mystery, without enmity, and without mercy. 'That *is* so;—make what you will of it!' Shakespeare said the Alps voided their rheum on the valleys, which indeed is precisely true, with the final truth, in that matter, of James Forbes,—but it was told in a mythic manner, and with an unpleasant British bias to the nasty. But Byron, saying that 'the glacier's cold and restless mass moved onward day by day,' said plainly what he saw and knew,—no more. So also, the Arabian Nights had told me of thieves who lived in enchanted caves, and beauties who fought with genii in the air; but Byron told me of thieves with whom he had ridden on their own hills, and of the fair Persians or Greeks who lived and died under the very sun that rose over my visible Norwood hills.

And in this narrow, but sure, truth, to Byron, as already to me it appeared that Love was a transient thing, and Death a dreadful one. He did not attempt to console me for Jessie's death, by saying she was happier in Heaven; or for Charles's, by saying it was a Providential dispensation to me on Earth. He did not tell me that war was a

just price for the glory of captains, or that the National command of murder diminished its guilt. Of all things within range of human thought he felt the facts, and discerned the natures with accurate justice.

But even all this he might have done, and yet been no master of mine, had not he sympathized with me in reverent love of beauty, and indignant recoil from ugliness. The witch of the Staubbach in her rainbow was a greatly more pleasant vision than Shakespeare's, like a rat without a tail, or Burns's, in her cutty sark. The sea-king Conrad had an immediate advantage with me over Coleridge's long, lank, brown, and ancient, mariner; and whatever Pope might have gracefully said, or honestly felt of Windsor woods and streams, was mere tinkling cymbal to me, compared with Byron's love of Lachin-y-Gair.

174. I must pause here, in tracing the sources of his influence over me, lest the reader should mistake the analysis which I am now able to give them, for a description of the feelings possible to me at fifteen. Most of these, however, were assuredly within the

knot of my unfolding mind—as the saffron of the crocus yet beneath the earth; and Byron —though he could not teach me to love mountains or sea more than I did in childhood, first animated them for me with the sense of real human nobleness and grief. He taught me the meaning of Chillon and of Meillerie, and bade me seek first in Venice—the ruined homes of Foscari and Falier.

And observe, the force with which he struck depended again on there being unquestionable reality of person in his stories, as of principle in his thoughts. Romance, enough and to spare, I had learnt from Scott—but his Lady of the Lake was as openly fictitious as his White Maid of Avenel: while Rogers was a mere dilettante, who felt no difference between landing where Tell leaped ashore, or standing where 'St. Preux has stood.' Even Shakespeare's Venice was visionary; and Portia as impossible as Miranda. But Byron told me of, and reanimated for me, the real people whose feet had worn the marble I trod on.

175. One word only, though it trenches on a future subject, I must permit myself about his rhythm. Its natural flow in almost prosaic

simplicity and tranquillity interested me extremely, in opposition alike to the symmetrical clauses of Pope's logical metre, and to the balanced strophes of classic and Hebrew verse. But though I followed his manner instantly in what verses I wrote for my own amusement, my respect for the structural, as opposed to fluent, force of the classic measures, supported as it was partly by Byron's contempt for his own work, and partly by my own architect's instinct for 'the principle of the pyramid,' made me long endeavour, in forming my prose style, to keep the cadences of Pope and Johnson for all serious statement. Of Johnson's influence on me I have to give account in the last chapter of this volume; meantime, I must get back to the days of mere rivulet-singing, in my poor little watercress life.

176. I had a sharp attack of pleurisy in the spring of '35, which gave me much gasping pain, and put me in some danger for three or four days, during which our old family physician, Dr. Walshman, and my mother, defended me against the wish of all other scientific people to have me bled. 'He wants all the blood he has in him to fight the illness,'

said the old doctor, and brought me well through, weak enough, however, to claim a fortnight's nursing and petting afterwards, during which I read the 'Fair Maid of Perth,' learned the song of 'Poor Louise,' and feasted on Stanfield's drawing of St. Michael's Mount, engraved in the 'Coast Scenery,' and Turner's Santa Sabina, Pool of Bethesda, and Corinth, engraved in the Bible series, lent me by Richard Fall's little sister. I got an immense quantity of useful learning out of those four plates, and am very thankful to possess now the originals of the Bethesda and Corinth.

Moreover, I planned all my proceedings on the journey to Switzerland, which was to begin the moment I was strong enough. I shaded in cobalt a 'cyanometer' to measure the blue of the sky with; bought a ruled note-book for geological observations, and a large quarto for architectural sketches with square rule and foot-rule ingeniously fastened outside. And I determined that the events and sentiments of this journey should be described in a poetic diary in the style of Don Juan, artfully combined with that of Childe Harold. Two cantos of this work were indeed finished—

carrying me across France to Chamouni—where I broke down, finding that I had exhausted on the Jura all the descriptive terms at my disposal, and that none were left for the Alps. I must try to give, in the next chapter, some useful account of the same part of the journey in less exalted language.

CHAPTER IX.

THE COL DE LA FAUCILLE.

177. ABOUT the moment in the forenoon when the modern fashionable traveller, intent on Paris, Nice, and Monaco, and started by the morning mail from Charing Cross, has a little recovered himself from the qualms of his crossing, and the irritation of fighting for seats at Boulogne, and begins to look at his watch to see how near he is to the buffet of Amiens, he is apt to be baulked and worried by the train's useless stop at one inconsiderable station, lettered ABBEVILLE. As the carriage gets in motion again, he may see, if he cares to lift his eyes for an instant from his newspaper, two square towers, with a curiously attached bit of traceried arch, dominant over the poplars and osiers of the marshy level he is traversing. Such glimpse is probably all he will ever wish to get of them; and I scarcely know how far I can make even

the most sympathetic reader understand their power over my own life.

The country town in which they are central,—once, like Croyland, a mere monk's and peasant's refuge (so for some time called 'Refuge'),—among the swamps of Somme, received about the year 650 the name of 'Abbatis Villa,'—'Abbot's-ford,' I had like to have written: house and village, I suppose we may rightly say,—as the chief dependence of the great monastery founded by St. Riquier at his native place, on the hillside five miles east of the present town. Concerning which saint I translate from the Dict^re^ des Sciences Eccles^ques^, what it may perhaps be well for the reader, in present political junctures, to remember for more weighty reasons than any arising out of such interest as he may take in my poor little nascent personality.

178. "St. Riquier, in Latin "Sanctus Richarius," born in the village of Centula, at two leagues from Abbeville, was so touched by the piety of two holy priests of Ireland, whom he had hospitably received, that he also embraced "la pénitence." Being ordained priest, he

devoted himself to preaching, and so passed into England. Then, returning into Ponthieu, he became, by God's help, powerful in work and word in leading the people to repentance. He preached at the court of Dagobert, and, a little while after that prince's death, founded the monastery which bore his name, and another, called Forest-Moutier, in the wood of Crécy, where he ended his life and penitence.'

I find further in the Ecclesiastical History of Abbeville, published in 1646 at Paris by François Pelican, 'Rue St. Jacques, a l'enseigne du Pelican,' that St. Riquier was himself of royal blood, that St. Angilbert, the seventh abbot, had married Charlemagne's second daughter Bertha — 'qui se rendit aussi Religieuse de l'ordre de Saint Benoist.' Louis, the eleventh abbot, was cousin-german to Charles the Bald, the twelfth was St. Angilbert's son, Charlemagne's grandson. Raoul, the thirteenth abbot, was the brother of the Empress Judith; and Carloman, the sixteenth, was the son of Charles the Bald.

179. Lifting again your eyes, good reader,

as the train gets to its speed, you may see gleaming opposite on the hillside the white village and its abbey,—not, indeed, the walls of the home of these princes and princesses, (afterwards again and again ruined,) but the still beautiful abbey built on their foundations by the monks of St. Maur.

In the year when the above quoted history of Abbeville was written (say 1600 for surety), the town, then familiarly called 'Faithful Abbeville,' contained 40,000 souls, 'living in great unity among themselves, of a marvellous frankness, fearing to do wrong to their neighbour, the women modest, honest, full of faith and charity, and adorned with a goodness and beauty toute innocente: the noblesse numerous, hardy, and adroit in arms, the masterships (maistrises) of arts and trades, with excellent workers in every profession, under sixty-four Mayor-Bannerets, who are the chiefs of the trades, and elect the mayor of the city, who is an independent Home Ruler, de grande probité, d'authorité, et sans reproche, aided by four eschevins of the present, and four of the past year; having authority of justice, police, and war, and right

to keep the weights and measures true and unchanged, and to punish those who abuse them, or sell by false weight or measure, or sell anything without the town's mark on it.' Moreover, the town contained, besides the great church of St. Wulfran, thirteen parish churches, six monasteries, eight nunneries, and five hospitals, among which churches I am especially bound to name that of St. George, begun by our own Edward in 1368, on the 10th of January; transferred and reconsecrated in 1469 by the Bishop of Bethlehem, and enlarged by the Marguilliers in 1536, 'because the congregation had so increased that numbers had to remain outside on days of solemnity.'

These reconstructions took place with so great ease and rapidity at Abbeville, owing partly to the number of its unanimous workmen, partly to the easily workable quality of the stone they used, and partly to the uncertainty of a foundation always on piles, that there is now scarce vestige left of any building prior to the fifteenth century. St. Wulfran itself, with St. Riquier, and all that remain of the parish churches (four only now,

I believe, besides St. Wulfran), are of the same flamboyant Gothic,—walls and towers alike coeval with the gabled timber houses of which the busier streets chiefly consisted when first I saw them.

180. I must here, in advance, tell the general reader that there have been, in sum, three centres of my life's thought: Rouen, Geneva, and Pisa. All that I did at Venice was bye-work, because her history had been falsely written before, and not even by any of her own people understood; and because, in the world of painting, Tintoret was virtually unseen, Veronese unfelt, Carpaccio not so much as named, when I began to study them; something also was due to my love of gliding about in gondolas. But Rouen, Geneva, and Pisa have been mistresses of all I know, and were mistresses of all I did, from the first moments I entered their gates.

In this journey of 1835 I first saw Rouen and Venice—Pisa not till 1840; nor could I understand the full power of any of those great scenes till much later. But for Abbeville, which is the preface and interpretation of

Rouen, I was ready on that 5th of June, and felt that here was entrance for me, into immediately healthy labour and joy.

181. For here I saw that art (of its local kind), religion, and present human life, were yet in perfect harmony. There were no dead six days and dismal seventh in those sculptured churches; there was no beadle to lock me out of them, or pew-shutter to shut me in. I might haunt them, fancying myself a ghost; peep round their pillars, like Rob Roy; kneel in them, and scandalize nobody; draw in them, and disturb none. Outside, the faithful old town gathered itself, and nestled under their buttresses like a brood beneath the mother's wings; the quiet, uninjurious aristocracy of the newer town opened into silent streets, between self-possessed and hidden dignities of dwelling, each with its courtyard and richly trellised garden. The commercial square, with the main street of traverse, consisted of uncompetitive shops, such as were needful, of the native wares: cloth and hosiery spun, woven, and knitted within the walls; cheese of neighbouring Neuchatel; fruit of their own gardens, bread from the

fields above the green coteaux; meat of their herds untainted by American tin; smith's work of sufficient scythe and ploughshare, hammered on the open anvil; groceries dainty, the coffee generally roasting odoriferously in the street, before the door; for the modistes, —well, perhaps a bonnet or two from Paris, the rest, wholesome dress for peasant and dame of Ponthieu. Above the prosperous, serenely busy and beneficent shop, the old dwelling-house of its ancestral masters; pleasantly carved, proudly roofed, keeping its place, and order, and recognised function, unfailing, unenlarging, for centuries. Round all, the breezy ramparts, with their long waving avenues; through all, in variously circuiting cleanness and sweetness of navigable river and active millstream, the green chalk-water of the Somme.

My most intense happinesses have of course been among mountains. But for cheerful, unalloyed, unwearying pleasure, the getting in sight of Abbeville on a fine summer afternoon, jumping out in the courtyard of the Hotel de l'Europe, and rushing down the street to see St. Wulfran again before the sun was off the

towers, are things to cherish the past for,—to the end.

182. Of Rouen, and its Cathedral, my saying remains yet to be said, if days be given me, in 'Our Fathers have told us.' The sight of them, and following journey up the Seine to Paris, then to Soissons and Rheims, determined, as aforesaid, the first centre and circle of future life work. Beyond Rheims, at Bar-le-Duc, I was brought again within the greater radius of the Alps, and my father was kind enough to go down by Plombiéres to Dijon, that I might approach them by the straightest pass of Jura.

The reader must pardon my relating so much as I think he may care to hear of this journey of 1835, rather as what *used* to happen, than as limitable to that date; for it is extremely difficult for me now to separate the circumstances of any one journey from those of subsequent days, in which we stayed at the same inns, with variation only from the blue room to the green, saw the same sights, and rejoiced the more in every pleasure—that it was not new.

And this latter part of the road from Paris

to Geneva, beautiful without being the least terrific or pathetic, but in the most lovable and cheerful way, became afterwards so dear and so domestic to me, that I will not attempt here to check my gossip of it.

183. We used always to drive out of the yard of La Cloche at Dijon in early morning—seven, after joyful breakfast at half-past six. The small saloon on the first floor to the front had a bedroom across the passage at the west end of it, whose windows commanded the cathedral towers over a low roof on the opposite side of the street. This was always mine, and its bed was in an alcove at the back, separated only by a lath partition from an extremely narrow passage leading from the outer gallery to Anne's room. It was a delight for Anne to which I think she looked forward all across France, to open a little hidden door from this passage, at the back of the alcove exactly above my pillow, and surprise, or wake, me in the morning.

I think I only remember once starting in rain. Usually the morning sun shone through the misty spray and far thrown diamonds of the fountain in the south-eastern suburb, and

threw long poplar shadows across the road to Genlis.

Genlis, Auxonne, Dole, Mont-sous-Vaudrey —three stages of 12 or 14 kilometres each, two of 18; in all about 70 kilometres=42 miles, from Dijon gate to Jura foot—we went straight for the hills always, lunching on French plums and bread.

Level plain of little interest to Auxonne. I used to wonder how any mortal creature could be content to live within actual sight of Jura, and never go to see them, all their lives! At Auxonne, cross the Saone, wide and beautiful in clear shallows of green stream —little more, yet, than a noble mountain torrent; one saw in an instant it came from Jura. Another hour of patience, and from the broken yellow limestone slopes of Dole —there, at last, they were—the long blue surges of them fading as far as eye could see to the south, more abruptly near to the north-east, where the bold outlier, almost island, of them, rises like a precipitous Wrekin, above Salins. Beyond Dole, a new wildness comes into the more undulating country, notable chiefly for its clay-built cottages

with enormously high thatched gables of roof. Strange, that I never inquired into the special reason of that form, nor looked into a single cottage to see the mode of its inhabitation!

184. The village, or rural town, of Poligny, clustered out of well-built old stone houses, with gardens and orchards; and gathering at the midst of it into some pretence or manner of a street, straggles along the roots of Jura at the opening of a little valley, which in Yorkshire or Derbyshire limestone would have been a gorge between nodding cliffs, with a pretty pattering stream at the bottom: but, in Jura is a fair retiring theatre of rising terraces, with bits of field and garden getting foot on them at various heights; a spiry convent in its hollow, and well-built little nests of husbandry-building set in corners of meadow, and on juts of rock;—no stream, to speak of, nor springs in it, nor the smallest conceivable reason for its being there, but that God made it.

'Far' retiring, I said,—perhaps a mile into the hills from the outer plain, by half a mile across, permitting the main road from Paris

to Geneva to serpentine and zigzag capriciously up the cliff terraces with innocent engineering, finding itself every now and then where it had no notion of getting to, and looking, in a circumflex of puzzled level, where it was to go next;—retrospect of the plain of Burgundy enlarging under its backward sweeps, till at last, under a broken bit of steep final crag, it got quite up the side, and out over the edge of the ravine, where said ravine closes as unreasonably as it had opened, and the surprised traveller finds himself, magically as if he were Jack of the Beanstalk, in a new plain of an upper world. A world of level rock, breaking at the surface into yellow soil, capable of scanty, but healthy, turf, and sprinkled copse and thicket; with here and there, beyond, a blue surge of pines, and over those, if the evening or morning were clear, always one small bright silvery likeness of a cloud.

185. These first tracts of Jura differ in many pleasant ways from the limestone levels round Ingleborough, which are their English types. The Yorkshire moors are mostly by a hundred or two feet higher, and exposed

to drift of rain under violent, nearly constant, wind. They break into wide fields of loose blocks, and rugged slopes of shale; and are mixed with sands and clay from the millstone grit, which nourish rank grass, and lodge in occasional morass: the wild winds also forbidding any vestige or comfort of tree, except here and there in a sheltered nook of new plantation. But the Jura sky is as calm and clear as that of the rest of France; if the day is bright on the plain, the bounding hills are bright also; the Jura rock, balanced in the make of it between chalk and marble, weathers indeed into curious rifts and furrows, but rarely breaks loose, and has long ago clothed itself either with forest flowers, or with sweet short grass, and all blossoms that love sunshine. The pure air, even on this lower ledge of a thousand feet above sea, cherishes their sweetest scents and liveliest colours, and the winter gives them rest under thawless serenity of snow.

186. A still greater and stranger difference exists in the system of streams. For all their losing themselves and hiding, and intermitting, their presence is distinctly felt on a Yorkshire

moor; one sees the places they have been in yesterday, the wells where they will flow after the next shower, and a tricklet here at the bottom of a crag, or a tinkle there from the top of it, is always making one think whether this is one of the sources of Aire, or rootlets of Ribble, or beginnings of Bolton Strid, or threads of silver which are to be spun into Tees.

But no whisper, nor murmur, nor patter, nor song, of streamlet disturbs the enchanted silence of open Jura. The rain-cloud clasps her cliffs, and floats along her fields; it passes, and in an hour the rocks are dry, and only beads of dew left in the Alchemilla leaves,—but of rivulet, or brook,—no vestige yesterday, or to-day, or to-morrow. Through unseen fissures and filmy crannies the waters of cliff and plain have alike vanished, only far down in the depths of the main valley glides the strong river, unconscious of change.

187. One is taught thus much for one's earliest lesson, in the two stages from Poligny to Champagnole, level over the absolutely crisp turf and sun-bright rock, without so much water anywhere as a cress could grow

in, or a tadpole wag his tail in,—and then, by a zigzag of shady road, forming the Park and Boulevard of the wistful little village, down to the single arched bridge that leaps the Ain, which pauses underneath in magnificent pools of clear pale green: the green of spring leaves; then clashes into foam, half weir, half natural cascade, and into a confused race of currents beneath hollow overhanging of crag festooned with leafage. The only marvel is, to anyone knowing Jura structure, that rivers should be visible anywhere at all, and that the rocks should be consistent enough to carry them in open air through the great valleys, without perpetual 'pertes' like that of the Rhone. Below the Lac de Joux the Orbe thus loses itself indeed, reappearing seven hundred feet * beneath in a scene of which I permit myself to quote my Papa Saussure's description.

188. 'A semicircular rock at least two hundred feet high, composed of great horizontal rocks hewn vertical, and divided † by ranks of pine which grow on their projecting ledges, closes to the west the valley of Valorbe:

* Six hundred and eighty French feet. Saussure, §§ 385.

† 'Taillés à pic, et entrecoupées.'

Mountains yet more elevated and covered with forests, form a circuit round this rock, which opens only to give passage to the Orbe, whose source is at its foot. Its waters, of a perfect limpidity, flow at first with a majestic tranquillity upon a bed tapestried with beautiful green moss (Fontinalis antipyretica), but soon, drawn into a steep slope, the thread of the current breaks itself in foam against the rocks which occupy the middle of its bed, while the borders, less agitated, flowing always on their green ground, set off the whiteness of the midst of the river; and thus it withdraws itself from sight, in following the course of a deep valley covered with pines, whose blackness is rendered more striking by the vivid green of the beeches which are scattered among them.

'Ah, if Petrarch had seen this spring and had found there his Laura, how much would not he have preferred it to that of Vaucluse, more abundant, perhaps, and more rapid, but of which the sterile rocks have neither the greatness of ours, nor the rich parure, which embellishes them.'

I have never seen the source of the Orbe,

but would commend to the reader's notice the frequent beauty of these great springs in literally *rising* at the base of cliffs, instead of falling, as one would have imagined likely, out of clefts in the front of them. In our own English antitype of the source of Orbe, Malham Cove, the flow of water is, in like manner, wholly at the base of the rock, and seems to rise to the ledge of its outlet from a deeper interior pool.

189. The old Hotel de la Poste at Champagnole stood just above the bridge of Ain, opposite the town, where the road got level again as it darted away towards Geneva. I think the year 1842 was the first in which we lengthened the day from Dijon by the two stages beyond Poligny; but afterwards, the Hotel de la Poste at Champagnole became a kind of home to us: going out, we had so much delight there, and coming home, so many thoughts, that a great space of life seemed to be passed in its peace. No one was ever in the house but ourselves; if a family stopped every third day or so, it was enough to maintain the inn, which, besides, had its own farm; and those who did stop,

rushed away for Geneva early in the morning. We, who were to sleep again at Mo'ez, were in no hurry; and in returning always left Geneva on Friday, to get the Sunday at Champagnole.

190. But my own great joy was in the early June evening, when we had arrived from Dijon, and I got out after the quickly dressed trout and cutlet for the first walk on rock and under pine.

With all my Tory prejudice (I mean, principle), I have to confess that one great joy of Swiss—above all, Jurassic Swiss—ground to me, is in its effectual, not merely theoretic, *liberty*. Among the greater hills, one can't always go just where one chooses,—all around is the too far, or too steep,—one wants to get to this, and climb that, and can't do either; —but in Jura one can go every way, and be happy everywhere. Generally, if there was time, I used to climb the islet of crag to the north of the village, on which there are a few grey walls of ruined castle, and the yet traceable paths of its 'pleasance,' whence to look if the likeness of white cloud were still on the horizon. Still there, in the clear evening,

and again and again, each year more marvellous to me; the derniers rochers, and calotte of Mont Blanc. Only those; that is to say just as much as may be seen over the Dome du Gouté from St. Martin's. But it looks as large from Champagnole as it does there—glowing in the last light like a harvest moon.

If there were not time to reach the castle rock, at least I could get into the woods above the Ain, and gather my first Alpine flowers. Again and again, I feel the duty of gratitude to the formalities and even vulgarities of Herne Hill, for making me to feel by contrast the divine wildness of Jura forest.

Then came the morning drive into the higher glen of the Ain, where the road began first to wind beside the falling stream. One never understands how those winding roads steal with their tranquil slope from height to height; it was but an hour's walking beside the carriage,—an hour passed like a minute; and one emerged on the high plain of St. Laurent, and the gentians began to gleam among the roadside grass, and the pines swept

round the horizon with the dark infinitude of ocean.

191. All Switzerland was there in hope and sensation, and what was less than Switzerland was in some sort better, in its meek simplicity and healthy purity. The Jura cottage is not carved with the stately richness of the Bernese, nor set together with the antique strength of Uri. It is covered with thin slit fine shingles, side-roofed as it were to the ground for mere dryness' sake, a little crossing of laths here and there underneath the window its only ornament. It has no daintiness of garden nor wealth of farm about it,—is indeed little more than a delicately-built chalet, yet trim and domestic, mildly intelligent of things other than pastoral, watch-making and the like, though set in the midst of the meadows, the gentian at its door, the lily of the valley wild in the copses hard by.

My delight in these cottages, and in the sense of human industry and enjoyment through the whole scene, was at the root of all pleasure in its beauty; see the passage

afterwards written in the "Seven Lamps" insisting on this as if it were general to human nature thus to admire through sympathy. I have noticed since, with sorrowful accuracy, how many people there are who, wherever they find themselves, think only 'of their position.' But the feeling which gave me so much happiness, both then and through life, differed also curiously, in its impersonal character, from that of many even of the best and kindest persons.

192. In the beginning of the Carlyle-Emerson correspondence, edited with too little comment by my dear friend Charles Norton, I find at page 18 this—to me entirely disputable, and to my thought, so far as undisputed, much blameable and pitiable, exclamation of my master's: 'Not till we can think that here and there one is thinking of us, one is loving us, does this waste earth become a peopled garden.' My training, as the reader has perhaps enough perceived, produced in me the precisely opposite sentiment. *My* times of happiness had always been when *nobody* was thinking of me; and the main discomfort and drawback to all

proceedings and designs, the attention and interference of the public—represented by my mother and the gardener. The garden was no waste place to me, because I did not suppose myself an object of interest either to the ants or the butterflies; and the only qualification of the entire delight of my evening walk at Champagnole or St. Laurent was the sense that my father and mother *were* thinking of me, and would be frightened if I was five minutes late for tea.

I don't mean in the least that I could have done without them. They were, to me, much more than Carlyle's wife to him; and if Carlyle had written, instead of, that he wanted Emerson to think of him in America, that he wanted his father and mother to be thinking of him at Ecclefechan, it had been well. But that the rest of the world was waste to him unless he had admirers in it, is a sorry state of sentiment enough, and I am somewhat tempted, for once, to admire the exactly opposite temper of my own solitude. My entire delight was in observing without being myself noticed,—if I could have been invisible, all the better. I was absolutely interested in

men and their ways, as I was interested in marmots and chamois, in tomtits and trout. If only they would stay still and let me look at them, and not get into their holes and up their heights! The living inhabitation of the world—the grazing and nesting in it,—the spiritual power of the air, the rocks, the waters, to be in the midst of it, and rejoice and wonder at it, and help it if I could,—happier if it needed no help of mine,—this was the essential love *of Nature* in me, this the root of all that I have usefully become, and the light of all that I have rightly learned.

193. Whether we slept at St. Laurent or Morez, the morning of the next day was an eventful one. In ordinarily fine weather, the ascent from Morez to Les Rousses, walked most of the way, was mere enchantment; so also breakfast, and fringed-gentian gathering, at Les Rousses. Then came usually an hour of tortured watching the increase of the noon clouds; for, however early we had risen, it was impossible to reach the Col de la Faucille before two o'clock, or later if we had bad horses, and at two o'clock, if there are clouds

above Jura, there will be assuredly clouds on the Alps.

It is worth notice, Saussure himself not having noticed it, that this main pass of Jura, unlike the great passes of the Alps, reaches its traverse-point very nearly under the highest summit of that part of the chain. The col, separating the source of the Bienne, which runs down to Morez and St. Claude, from that of the Valserine, which winds through the midst of Jura to the Rhone at Bellegarde, is a spur of the Dole itself, under whose prolonged masses the road is then carried six miles farther, ascending very slightly to the Col de la Faucille, where the chain opens suddenly, and a sweep of the road, traversed in five minutes at a trot, opens the whole Lake of Geneva, and the chain of the Alps along a hundred miles of horizon.

194. I have never seen that view perfectly but once—in this year 1835; when I drew it carefully in my then fashion, and have been content to look back to it as the confirming sequel of the first view of the Alps from Schaffhausen. Very few travellers, even in

old times, saw it at all; tired of the long posting journey from Paris, by the time they got to the col they were mostly thinking only of their dinners and rest at Geneva; the guide books said nothing about it; and though, for everybody, it was an inevitable task to ascend the Righi, nobody ever thought there was anything to be seen from the Dole.

Both mountains have had enormous influence on my whole life;—the Dole continually and calmly; the Righi at sorrowful intervals, as will be seen. But the Col de la Faucille, on that day of 1835, opened to me in distinct vision the Holy Land of my future work and true home in this world. My eyes had been opened, and my heart with them, to see and to possess royally such a kingdom! Far as the eye could reach—that land and its moving or pausing waters; Arve, and his gates of Cluse, and his glacier fountains; Rhone, and the infinitude of his sapphire lake,—his peace beneath the narcissus meads of Vevay—his cruelty beneath the promontories of Sierre. And all that rose against and melted into

the sky, of mountain and mountain snow; and all that living plain, burning with human gladness — studded with white homes, — a milky way of star-dwellings cast across its sunlit blue.

CHAPTER X.

QUEM TU, MELPOMENE.

195. WHETHER in the biography of a nation, or of a single person, it is alike impossible to trace it steadily through successive years. Some forces are failing while others strengthen, and most act irregularly, or else at uncorresponding periods of renewed enthusiasm after intervals of lassitude. For all clearness of exposition, it is necessary to follow first one, then another, without confusing notices of what is happening in other directions.

I must accordingly cease talk of pictorial and rhythmic efforts of the year 1835, at this point; and go back to give account of another segment of my learning, which might have had better consequence than ever came of it, had the stars so pleased.

196. I cannot, and perhaps the reader will be thankful, remember anything of the

Apolline instincts under which I averred to incredulous papa and mamma that, 'though I could not speak, I could play upon the fiddle.' But even to this day, I look back with starts of sorrow to a lost opportunity of showing what was in me, of that manner of genius, on the occasion of a grand military dinner in the state room of the Sussex, at Tunbridge Wells; where, when I was something about eight or nine years old, we were staying in an unadventurous manner, enjoying the pantiles, the common, the sight, if not the taste, of the lovely fountain, and drives to the High Rocks. After the military dinner there was military music, and by connivance of waiters, Anne and I got in, somehow, mixed up with the dessert. I believe I was rather a pretty boy then, and dressed in a not wholly civilian manner, in a sort of laced and buttoned surtout. My mind was extremely set on watching the instrumental manœuvres of the band, —with admiration of all, but burning envy of the drummer.

The colonel took notice of my rapt attention, and sent an ensign to bring me round to him; and after getting, I know not how, at my mind

in the matter, told me I might go and ask the drummer to give me his lovely round-headed sticks, and he would. I was in two minds to do it, having good confidence in my powers of keeping time. But the dismal shyness conquered:—I shook my head woefully, and my musical career was blighted. No one will ever know what I could then have brought out of that drum, or (if my father had perchance taken me to Spain) out of a tambourine.

197. My mother, busy in graver matters, had never cultivated the little she had been taught of music, though her natural sensibility to it was great. Mrs. Richard Gray used sometimes to play gracefully to me, but if ever she struck a false note, her husband used to put his fingers in his ears, and dance about the room, exclaiming, 'O Mary, Mary dear!' and so extinguish her. Our own Perth Mary played dutifully her scales, and little more; but I got useful help, almost unconsciously, from a family of young people who ought, if my chronology had been systematic, to have been affectionately spoken of long ago.

In above describing my father's counting-house, I said the door was opened by a latch

pulled by the head clerk. This head clerk, or, putting it more modestly, topmost of two clerks, Henry Watson, was a person of much import in my father's life and mine; import which, I perceive, looking back, to have been as in many respects tender and fortunate, yet in others extremely doleful, both to us and himself.

The chief fault in my father's mind, (I say so reverently, for its faults were few, but necessarily, for they were very fatal,) was his dislike of being excelled. He knew his own power—felt that he had not nerve to use or display it, in full measure; but all the more, could not bear, in his own sphere, any approach to equality. He chose his clerks first for trustworthiness, secondly for—*in*capacity. I am not sure that he would have sent away a clever one, if he had chanced on such a person; but he assuredly did not look for mercantile genius in them, but rather for subordinates who would be subordinate for ever. Frederick the Great chose his clerks in the same way; but then, his clerks never supposed themselves likely to be king, while a merchant's clerks are apt to hope they may

at least become partners, if not successors. Also, Friedrich's clerks were absolutely fit for *their* business; but my father's clerks were, in many ways, utterly unfit for theirs. Of which unfitness my father greatly complaining, nevertheless by no means bestirred himself to find fitter ones. He used to send Henry Watson on business tours, and assure him afterwards that he had done more harm than good: he would now and then leave Henry Ritchie to write a business letter; and, I think, find with some satisfaction that it was needful afterwards to write two, himself, in correction of it. There was scarcely a day when he did not come home in some irritation at something that one or other of them had done, or not done. But they stayed with him till his death.

198. Of the second in command, Mr. Ritchie, I will say what is needful in another place; but the clerk of confidence, Henry Watson, has already been left unnoticed too long. He was, I believe, the principal support of a widowed mother and three grown-up sisters, amiable, well educated, and fairly sensible women, all of them; refined beyond the

average tone of their position,—and desirous, not vulgarly, of keeping themselves in the upper-edge circle of the middle class. Not vulgarly, I say, as caring merely to have carriages stopping at their door, but with real sense of the good that *is* in good London society, in London society's way. They liked, as they did not drop their own h's, to talk with people who did not drop theirs; to hear what was going on in polite circles; and to have *entrée* to a pleasant dance, or rightly given concert. Being themselves both good and pleasing musicians, (the qualities are not united in all musicians,) this was not difficult for them;—nevertheless it meant necessarily having a house in a street of tone, near the Park, and being nicely dressed, and giving now and then a little reception themselves. On the whole, it meant the total absorption of Henry's salary, and of the earnings, in some official or otherwise plumaged occupations, of two brothers besides, David and William. The latter, now I think of it, was a West-End wine merchant, supplying the nobility with Clos-Vougeot, Hochheimer, dignifiedly still Champagne, and other nectareous drinks, of which the bottom

fills up half the bottle, and which are only to be had out of the cellars of Grand Dukes and Counts of the Empire. The family lived, to the edge of their means,—not too narrowly: the young ladies enjoyed themselves, studied German—and at that time it was thought very fine and poetical to study German;—sang extremely well, gracefully and easily; had good taste in dress, the better for being a little matronly and old-fashioned: and the whole family thought themselves extremely *élite*, in a substantial and virtuous manner.

199. When Henry Watson was first taken, (then, I believe, a boy of sixteen,) I know not by what chance, or on what commendation, into my father's counting-house, the opening was thought by his family a magnificent one; they were very thankful and happy, and, of course, in their brother's interest, eager to do all they could to please my father and mother. They found, however, my mother not very easily pleased; and presently began themselves to be not a little surprised and *dis*-pleased by the way things went on, both in the counting-house and at Herne Hill. At the one, there was steady work; at the other,

little show: the clerks could by no means venture to leave their desks for a garden-party, and after dark were allowed only tallow candles. That the head of the Firm should live in the half of a party-walled house, beyond the suburb of Camberwell, was a degradation and disgrace to everybody connected with the business! and that Henry should be obliged every morning to take omnibus into the eastern City, and work within scent of Billingsgate, instead of walking elegantly across Piccadilly to an office in St. James's Street, was alike injurious to him, and disparaging to my father's taste and knowledge of the world. Also, to the feminine circle, my mother was a singular, and sorrowfully intractable, phenomenon. Taking herself no interest in German studies, and being little curious as to the events, and little respectful to the opinions, of Mayfair, she was apt to look with some severity, perhaps a tinge of jealousy, on what she thought pretentious in the accomplishments, or affected in the manners, of the young people: while they, on the other hand, though quite sensible of my mother's worth, grateful for her good will, and in time really

attached to her, were not disposed to pay much attention to the opinions of a woman who knew only her own language;—and were more restive than responsive under kindnesses which frequently took the form of advice.

200. These differences in feeling, irreconcilable though they were, did not hinder the growth of consistently pleasant and sincerely affectionate relations between my mother and the young housewives. With what best of girl nature was in them, Fanny, Helen, and foolishest, cleverest little Juliet, enjoyed, in spring time, exchanging for a day or two the dusty dignity of their street of tone in Mayfair for the lilacs and laburnums of Herne-hill: and held themselves, with their brother Henry, always ready at call to come out on any occasion of the hill's hospitality to some respected correspondent of the House, and sing to us the prettiest airs from the new opera, with a due foundation and tonic intermixture of classical German.

Henry had a singularly beautiful tenor voice; and the three sisters, though not, any one of them, of special power, sang their parts with sufficient precision, with intelligent taste, and

with the pretty unison of sisterly voices. In this way, from early childhood, I was accustomed to hear a great range of good music completely and rightly rendered, without breakings down, missings out, affectations of manner, or vulgar prominence of execution. Had the quartette sung me English glees, or Scotch ballads, or British salt water ones, or had any one of the girls had gift enough to render higher music with its proper splendour, I might easily have been led to spare some time from my maps and mineralogy for attentive listening. As it was, the scientific German compositions were simply tiresome to me, and the pretty modulations of Italian, which I understood no syllable of, pleasant only as the trills of the blackbirds, who often listened, and expressed their satisfaction by joining in the part-songs through the window that opened to the back garden in the spring evenings. Yet the education of my ear and taste went on without trouble of mine. I do not think I ever heard any masterly professional music, until, as good hap was, I heard the best, only to *be* heard during a narrow space of those young days.

201. I too carelessly left without explanation the casual sentence about 'fatal dinner at Mr. Domecq's' when I was fourteen, above, Chap. IV., p. 115. My father's Spanish partner was at that time living in the Champs Elysées, with his English wife and his five daughters; the eldest, Diana, on the eve of her marriage with one of Napoleon's officers, Count Maison; the four others, much younger, chanced to be at home on vacation from their convent school: and we had happy family dinner with them, and mamma and the girls and a delightful old French gentleman, Mr. Badell, played afterwards at 'la toilette de Madame' with me; only I couldn't remember whether I was the necklace or the garters; and then Clotilde and Cécile played 'les Echos' and other fascinations of dance-melody,—only I couldn't dance; and at last Elise had to take pity on me as above described. But the best, if not the largest, part of the conversation among the elders was of the recent death of Bellini, the sorrow of all Paris for him, and the power with which his 'I Puritani' was being rendered by the reigning four great singers for whom it was written.

202. It puzzles me that I have no recollection of any first sight and hearihg of an opera. Not even, for that matter, of my first going to a theatre, though I was full twelve, before being taken; and afterwards, it was a matter of intense rapture, of a common sort, to be taken to a pantomime. And I greatly enjoy theatre to this day—it is one of the pleasures that have least worn out; yet, while I remember Friar's Crag at Derwentwater when I was four years old, and the courtyard of our Paris inn at five, I have no memory whatever, and am a little proud to have none, of my first theatre. To be taken now at Paris to the feebly dramatic 'Puritani' was no great joy to me; but I then heard, and it will always be a rare, and only once or twice in a century possible, thing to hear, four great musicians, all rightly to be called of genius, singing together, with sincere desire to assist each other, not eclipse; and to exhibit, not only their own power of singing, but the beauty of the music they sang.

203. Still more fortunately it happened that a woman of *faultless* genius led the following dances,—Taglioni; a person of the highest

natural faculties, and stainlessly simple character, gathered with sincerest ardour and reverence into her art. My mother, though she allowed me without serious remonstrance to be taken to the theatre by my father, had the strictest Puritan prejudice against the stage; yet enjoyed it so much that I think she felt the sacrifice she made in not going with us to be a sort of price accepted by the laws of virtue for what was sinful in her concession to my father and me. She went, however, to hear and see this group of players, renowned, without any rivals, through all the cities of Europe; — and, strange and pretty to say, her instinct of the innocence, beauty, and wonder, in every motion of the Grace of her century, was so strong, that from that time forth my mother would always, at a word, go with us to see Taglioni.

Afterwards, a season did not pass without my hearing twice or thrice, at least, those four singers; and I learned the better because my ear was never jaded the intention of the music written for them, or studied by them; and am extremely glad now that I heard *their*

renderings of Mozart and Rossini, neither of whom can be now said ever to be heard at all, owing to the detestable quickening of the time. Grisi and Malibran sang at least one-third slower than any modern cantatrice;* and Patti, the last time I heard her, massacred Zerlina's part in 'La ci darem,' as if the audience and she had but the one object of getting Mozart's air done with, as soon as possible.

204. Afterwards, (the confession may as well be got over at once,) when I had got settled in my furrow at Christ Church, it chanced that the better men of the college had founded a musical society, under instruction of the cathedral organist, Mr. Marshall, an extremely simple, good-natured, and good-humoured person, by whose encouragement I was brought to the point of trying to learn to sing, 'Come mai posso vivere se Rosina non m'ascolta,' and to play the two lines of prelude to the 'A te o cara,' and what notes I could manage to read of accompaniments to other

* It is a pretty conceit of musical people to call themselves scientific, when they have not yet fixed their unit of time!

songs of similarly tender purport. In which, though never even getting so far as to read with ease, I nevertheless, between my fine rhythmic ear, and true lover's sentiment, got to understand some principles of musical art, which I shall perhaps be able to enforce with benefit on the musical public mind, even to-day, if only I can get first done with this autobiography.

What the furrow at Christ Church was to be like, or where to lead, none of my people seem at this time to have been thinking. My mother, watching the naturalistic and methodic bent of me, was, I suppose, tranquil in the thought of my becoming another White of Selborne, or Vicar of Wakefield, victorious in Whistonian and every other controversy. My father perhaps conceived more cometic or meteoric career for me, but neither of them put the matter seriously in hand, however deeply laid up in heart: and I was allowed without remonstrance to go on measuring the blue of the sky, and watching the flight of the clouds, till I had forgotten most of the Latin I ever knew, and all the Greek, except Anacreon's ode to the rose.

205. Some little effort was made to pull me together in 1836 by sending me to hear Mr. Dale's lectures at King's College, where I explained to Mr. Dale, on meeting him one day in the court of entrance, that porticoes should not be carried on the top of arches; and considered myself exalted because I went in at the same door with boys who had square caps on. The lectures were on early English literature, of which, though I had never read a word of any before Pope, I thought myself already a much better judge than Mr. Dale. His quotation of "Knut the king came sailing by" stayed with me; and I think that was about all I learnt during the summer. For, as my adverse stars would have it, that year, my father's partner, Mr. Domecq, thought it might for once be expedient that he should himself pay a complimentary round of visits to his British customers, and asked if meanwhile he might leave his daughters at Herne Hill to see the lions at the Tower, and so on. How we got them all into Herne Hill corners and cupboards would be inexplicable but with a plan of the three stories! The arrangements were half Noah's ark, half Doll's house, but

we got them all in: Clotilde, a graceful oval-faced blonde of fifteen; Cécile, a dark, finely-browed, beautifully-featured girl of thirteen; Elise, again fair, round-faced like an English girl, a treasure of good nature and good sense; Caroline, a delicately quaint little thing of eleven. They had all been born abroad, Clotilde at Cadiz, and of course convent-bred; but lately accustomed to be much in society during vacation at Paris. Deeper than any one dreamed, the sight of them in the Champs Elysées had sealed itself in me, for they were the first well-bred and well-dressed girls I had ever seen — or at least spoken to. I mean of course, by well-dressed, perfectly simply dressed, with Parisian cutting and fitting. They were all "bigoted" — as Protestants would say; quietly firm, as they ought to say—Roman Catholics; spoke Spanish and French with perfect grace, and English with broken precision: were all fairly sensible, Clotilde sternly and accurately so, Elise gaily and kindly, Cécile serenely, Caroline keenly. A most curious galaxy, or southern cross, of unconceived stars, floating on a sudden into my obscure firmament of London suburb.

206. How my parents could allow their young novice to be cast into the fiery furnace of the outer world in this helpless manner the reader may wonder, and only the Fates know; but there was this excuse for them, that they had never seen me the least interested or anxious about girls—never caring to stay in the promenades at Cheltenham or Bath, or on the parade at Dover; on the contrary, growling and mewing if I was ever kept there, and off to the sea or the fields the moment I got leave; and they had educated me in such extremely orthodox English Toryism and Evangelicalism that they could not conceive their scientific, religious, and George the Third revering youth, wavering in his constitutional balance towards French Catholics. And I had never *said* anything about the Champs Elysées! Virtually convent-bred more closely than the maids themselves, without a single sisterly or cousinly affection for refuge or lightning rod, and having no athletic skill or pleasure to check my dreaming, I was thrown, bound hand and foot, in my unaccomplished simplicity, into the fiery furnace, or fiery cross, of these four girls,—who of course

reduced me to a mere heap of white ashes in four days. Four days, at the most, it took to reduce me to ashes, but the Mercredi des cendres lasted four years.

Anything more comic in the externals of it, anything more tragic in the essence, could not have been invented by the skilfullest designer in either kind. In my social behaviour and mind I was a curious combination of Mr. Traddles, Mr. Toots, and Mr. Winkle. I had the real fidelity and single-mindedness of Mr. Traddles, with the conversational abilities of Mr. Toots, and the heroic ambition of Mr. Winkle;—all these illuminated by imagination like Mr. Copperfield's, at his first Norwood dinner.

207. Clotilde (Adèle Clotilde in full, but her sisters called her Clotilde, after the queen-saint, and I Adèle, because it rhymed to shell, spell, and knell) was only made more resplendent by the circlet of her sisters' beauty; while my own shyness and unpresentableness were farther stiffened, or rather sanded, by a patriotic and Protestant conceit, which was tempered neither by politeness nor sympathy; so that, while in company I sate jealously

miserable like a stock fish (in truth, I imagine, looking like nothing so much as a skate in an aquarium trying to get up the glass), on any blessed occasion of tête-à-tête, I endeavoured to entertain my Spanish-born, Paris-bred, and Catholic-hearted mistress with my own views upon the subjects of the Spanish Armada, the Battle of Waterloo, and the doctrine of Transubstantiation.

To these modes of recommending myself, however, I did not fail to add what display I could make of the talents I supposed myself to possess. I wrote with great pains, and straining of my invention, a story about Naples (which I had never seen), and 'the Bandit Leoni,' whom I represented as typical of what my own sanguinary and adventurous disposition would have been had I been brought up a bandit; and 'the Maiden Giuletta,' in whom I portrayed all the perfections of my mistress. Our connection with Messrs. Smith & Elder enabled me to get this story printed in 'Friendship's Offering;' and Adèle laughed over it in rippling ecstasies of derision, of which I bore the pain bravely, for the sake of seeing her thoroughly amused.

I dared not address any sonnets straight to herself; but when she went back to Paris, wrote her a French letter seven quarto pages long, descriptive of the desolations and solitudes of Herne Hill since her departure. This letter, either Elise or Caroline wrote to tell me she had really read, and 'laughed immensely at the French of.' Both Caroline and Elise pitied me a little, and did not like to say she had also laughed at the contents.

208. The old people, meanwhile, saw little harm in all this. Mr. Domecq, who was extremely good-natured, and a good judge of character, rather liked me, because he saw that I was good-natured also, and had some seedling brains, which would come up in time: in the interests of the business he was perfectly ready to give me any of his daughters I liked, who could also be got to like me, but considered that the time was not come to talk of such things. My father was entirely of the same mind, besides being pleased at my getting a story printed in 'Friendship's Offering,' glad that I saw something of girls with good manners, and in hopes that if I wrote poetry about them, it might be as good as the Hours

of Idleness. My mother, who looked upon the idea of my marrying a Roman Catholic as too monstrous to be possible in the decrees of Heaven, and too preposterous to be even guarded against on earth, was rather annoyed at the whole business, as she would have been if one of her chimneys had begun smoking,—but had not the slightest notion her house was on fire. She saw more, however, than my father, into the depth of the feeling, but did not, in her motherly tenderness, like to grieve me by any serious check to it. She hoped, when the Domecqs went back to Paris, we might see no more of them, and that Adèle's influence and memory would pass away—with next winter's snow.

209. Under these indulgent circumstances, —bitterly ashamed of the figure I had made, but yet not a whit dashed back out of my daily swelling foam of furious conceit, supported as it was by real depth of feeling, and (note it well, good reader) by a true and glorious sense of the newly-revealed miracle of human love, in its exaltation of the physical beauty of the world I had till then sought by its own light alone,—I set myself in that my

seventeenth year, in a state of majestic imbecility, to write a tragedy on a Venetian subject, in which the sorrows of my soul were to be enshrined in immortal verse,—the fair heroine, Bianca, was to be endowed with the perfections of Desdemona and the brightness of Juliet,—and Venice and Love were to be described, as never had been thought of before. I may note in passing, that on my first sight of the Ducal Palace, the year before, I had deliberately announced to my father and mother, and—it seemed to me stupidly incredulous—Mary, that I meant to make such a drawing of the Ducal Palace as never had been made before. This I proceeded to perform by collecting some hasty memoranda on the spot, and finishing my design elaborately out of my head at Treviso. The drawing still exists,—for a wonder, out of perspective, which I had now got too conceited to follow the rules of,—and with the diaper pattern of the red and white marbles represented as a bold panelling in relief. No figure disturbs the solemn tranquillity of the Riva, and the gondolas—each in the shape of a Turkish crescent standing on its back on

the water — float about without the aid of gondoliers.

I remember nothing more of that year, 1836, than sitting under the mulberry tree in the back garden, writing my tragedy. I forget whether we went travelling or not, or what I did in the rest of the day. It is all now blank to me, except Venice, Bianca, and looking out over Shooter's Hill, where I could see the last turn of the road to Paris.

Some Greek, though I don't know what, must have been read, and some mathematics, for I certainly knew the difference between a square and cube root when I went to Oxford, and was put by my tutor into Herodotus, out of whom I immediately gathered materials enough to write my Scythian drinking song, in imitation of the Giaour.

210. The reflective reader can scarcely but have begun to doubt, by this time, the accuracy of my statement that I took no harm from Byron. But he need not. The particular form of expression which my folly took was indeed directed by him; but this form was the best it could have taken. I got better

practice in English by imitating the Giaour and Bride of Abydos than I could have had under any other master, (the tragedy was of course Shakespearian!) and the state of my mind was—my mind's own fault, and that of surrounding mischance or mismanagement—not Byron's. In that same year, 1836, I took to reading Shelley also, and wasted much time over the Sensitive Plant and Epipsychidion; and I took a good deal of harm from *him*, in trying to write lines like 'prickly and pulpous and blistered and blue;' or 'it was a little lawny islet by anemone and vi'let, — like mosaic paven,' etc.; but in the state of frothy fever I was in, there was little good for me to be got out of anything. The perseverance with which I tried to wade through the Revolt of Islam, and find out (I never did, and don't know to this day) who revolted against whom, or what, was creditable to me; and the Prometheus really made me understand something of Æschylus. I am not sure that, for what I was to turn out, my days of ferment could have been got over much easier: at any rate, it was better than if I had been learning to shoot, or hunt, or smoke, or

gamble. The entirely inscrutable thing to me, looking back on myself, is my total want of all reason, will, or design in the business: I had neither the resolution to win Adèle, the courage to do without her, the sense to consider what was at last to come of it all, or the grace to think how disagreeable I was making myself at the time to everybody about me. There was really no more capacity nor intelligence in me than in a just fledged owlet, or just open-eyed puppy, disconsolate at the existence of the moon.

211. Out of my feebly melodious complaints to that luminary, however, I was startled by a letter to my father from Christ Church, advising him that there was room for my residence in the January term of 1837, and that I must come up to matriculate in October of the instant year, 1836.

Strangely enough, my father had never enquired into the nature and manner of matriculation, till he took me up to display in Oxford;—he, very nearly as much a boy as I, for anything we knew of what we were about. He never had any doubt about putting me at the most fashionable college,

and of course my name had been down at Christ Church years before I was called up; but it had never dawned on my father's mind that there were two, fashionable and unfashionable, orders, or castes, of undergraduate at Christ Church, one of these being called Gentlemen-Commoners, the other Commoners; and that these last seemed to occupy an almost bisectional point between the Gentlemen-Commoners and the Servitors. All these 'invidious' distinctions are now done away with in our Reformed University. Nobody sets up for the special rank of a gentleman, but nobody will be set down as a commoner; and though, of the old people, anybody will beg or canvass for a place for their children in a charity school, everybody would be furious at the thought of his son's wearing, at college, the gown of a Servitor.

212 How far I agree with the modern British citizen in these lofty sentiments, my general writings have enough shown; but I leave the reader to form his own opinions without any contrary comment of mine, on the results of the exploded system of things in my own college life.

My father did not like the word 'commoner,' —all the less, because our relationships in general were not uncommon. Also, though himself satisfying his pride enough in being the head of the sherry trade, he felt and saw in his son powers which had not their full scope in the sherry trade. His ideal of my future,—now entirely formed in conviction of my genius,—was that I should enter at college into the best society, take all the prizes every year, and a double first to finish with; marry Lady Clara Vere de Vere; write poetry as good as Byron's, only pious; preach sermons as good as Bossuet's, only Protestant; be made, at forty, Bishop of Winchester, and at fifty, Primate of England.

213. With all these hopes, and under all these temptations, my father was yet restrained and embarrassed in no small degree by his old and steady sense of what was becoming to his station in life: and he consulted anxiously, but honestly, the Dean of Christ Church, (Gaisford,) and my college tutor that was to be, Mr. Walter Brown, whether a person in his position might without impropriety enter his son as a gentleman-commoner. I did not

hear the dialogues, but the old Dean must have answered with a grunt, that my father had every right to make me a gentleman-commoner if he liked, and could pay the fees; the tutor, more attentively laying before him the conditions of the question, may perhaps have said, with courtesy, that it would be good for the college to have a reading man among the gentlemen-commoners, who, as a rule, were not studiously inclined; but he was compelled also to give my father a hint, that as far as my reading had already gone, it was not altogether certain I could pass the entrance examination which had to be sustained by commoners. This last suggestion was conclusive. It was not to be endured that the boy who had been expected to carry all before him, should get himself jammed in the first turnstile. I was entered as a Gentleman-Commoner without farther debate, and remember still, as if it were yesterday, the pride of first walking out of the Angel Hotel, and past University College, holding my father's arm, in my velvet cap and silk gown.

214. Yes, good reader, the velvet and silk made a difference, not to my mother only, but

to me! Quite one of the telling and weighty points in the home debates concerning this choice of Hercules, had been that the commoner's gown was not only of ugly stuff, but had no flowing lines in it, and was virtually only a black rag tied to one's shoulders. One was thrice a gownsman in a flowing gown.

So little, indeed, am I disposed now in maturer years to deride these unphilosophical feelings, that instead of effacing distinction of dress at the University (except for the boating clubs), I would fain have seen them extended into the entire social order of the country. I think that nobody but duchesses should be allowed to wear diamonds; that lords should be known from common people by their stars, a quarter of a mile off; that every peasant girl should boast her county by some dainty ratification of cap or bodice; and that in the towns a vintner should be known from a fishmonger by the cut of his jerkin.

That walk to the Schools, and the waiting, outside the Divinity School, in comforting admiration of its door, my turn for matriculation, continue still for me, at pleasure. But I remember nothing more that year; nor

anything of the first days of the next, until early in January we drove down to Oxford, only my mother and I, by the beautiful Henley road, weary a little as we changed horses for the last stage from Dorchester; solemnized, in spite of velvet and silk, as we entered among the towers in the twilight; and after one more rest under the domestic roof of the Angel, I found myself the next day at evening, alone, by the fireside, entered into command of my own life, in my own college room in Peckwater.

CHAPTER XI.

CHRIST CHURCH CHOIR.

215. ALONE by the fireside of the little back room, which looked into the narrow lane, chiefly then of stabling, I sate collecting my resolution for college life.

I had not much to collect; nor, so far as I knew, much to collect it against. I had about as clear understanding of my whereabouts, or foresight of my fortune, as Davie Gellatly might have had in my place; with these farther inferiorities to Davie, that I could neither dance, sing, nor roast eggs. There was not the slightest fear of my gambling, for I had never touched a card, and looked upon dice as people now do on dynamite. No fear of my being tempted by the strange woman, for was not I in love? and besides, never allowed to be out after half-past nine. No fear of my running in debt, for there were no Turners to be had in Oxford, and I cared for

nothing else in the world of material possession. No fear of my breaking my neck out hunting, for I couldn't have ridden a hack down the High Street; and no fear of my ruining myself at a race, for I never had been but at one race in my life, and had not the least wish to win anybody else's money.

I expected some ridicule, indeed, for these my simple ways, but was safe against ridicule in my conceit: the only thing I doubted myself in, and very rightly, was the power of applying for three years to work in which I took not the slightest interest. I resolved, however, to do my parents and myself as much credit as I could, said my prayers very seriously, and went to bed in good hope.

216. And here I must stay, for a minute or two, to give some account of the state of mind I had got into during the above-described progress of my education, touching religious matters.

As far as I recollect, the steady Bible reading with my mother ended with our first continental journey, when I was fourteen; one could not read three chapters after breakfast while the horses were at the door. For this

lesson was substituted my own private reading of a chapter, morning and evening, and, of course, saying the Lord's Prayer after it, and asking for everything that was nice for myself and my family; after which I waked or slept, without much thought of anything but my earthly affairs, whether by night or day.

It had never entered into my head to doubt a word of the Bible, though I saw well enough already that its words were to be understood otherwise than I had been taught; but the more I believed it, the less it did me any good. It was all very well for Abraham to do what angels bid him,—so would I, if any angels bid me; but none had ever appeared to me that I knew of, not even Adèle, who couldn't be an angel because she was a Roman Catholic.

217. Also, if I had lived in Christ's time, of course I would have gone with Him up to the mountain, or sailed with Him on the Lake of Galilee; but that was quite another thing from going to Beresford chapel, Walworth, or St. Bride's, Fleet Street. Also, though I felt myself somehow called to imitate

Christian in the Pilgrim's Progress, I couldn't see that either Billiter Street and the Tower Wharf, where my father had his cellars, or the cherry-blossomed garden at Herne Hill, where my mother potted her flowers, could be places I was bound to fly from as in the City of Destruction. Without much reasoning on the matter, I had virtually concluded from my general Bible reading that, never having meant or done any harm that I knew of, I could not be in danger of hell: while I saw also that even the crême de la crême of religious people seemed to be in no hurry to go to heaven. On the whole, it seemed to me, all that was required of *me* was to say my prayers, go to church, learn my lessons, obey my parents, and enjoy my dinner.

218. Thus minded, in the slowly granted light of the winter morning I looked out upon the view from my college windows, of Christ Church library and the smooth-gravelled square of Peckwater, vexed a little because I was not in an oriel window looking out on a Gothic chapel: but quite unconscious of the real condemnation I had fallen under, or of the loss that was involved to me in having

nothing but Christ Church library, and a gravelled square, to see out of window during the spring-times of two years of youth.

At the moment I felt that, though dull, it was all very grand; and that the architecture, though Renaissance, was bold, learned, well-proportioned, and variously didactic. In reality, I might just as well have been sent to the dungeon of Chillon, except for the damp; better, indeed, if I could have seen the three small trees from the window slit, and good groining and pavement, instead of the modern vulgar upholstery of my room furniture.

Even the first sight of college chapel disappointed me, after the large churches abroad; but its narrow vaults had very different offices.

On the whole, of important places and services for the Christian souls of England, the choir of Christ Church was at that epoch of English history virtually the navel, and seat of life. There remained in it the traditions of Saxon, Norman, Elizabethan, religion unbroken,—the memory of loyalty, the reality of learning, and, in nominal obedience at least,

and in the heart of them with true docility, stood every morning, to be animated for the highest duties owed to their country, the noblest of English youth. The greater number of the peers of England, and, as a rule, the best of her squirealty, passed necessarily through Christ Church.

The cathedral itself was an epitome of English history. Every stone, every pane of glass, every panel of woodwork, was true, and of its time,—not an accursed sham of architect's job. The first shrine of St. Frideswide had indeed been destroyed, and her body rent and scattered on the dust by the Puritan; but her second shrine was still beautiful in its kind,—most lovely English work both of heart and hand. The Norman vaults above were true English Norman; bad and rude enough, but the best we could do with our own wits, and no French help. The roof was true Tudor,—grotesque, inventively constructive, delicately carved; it, with the roof of the hall staircase, summing the builder's skill of the fifteenth century. The west window, with its clumsy painting of the Adoration of the Shepherds, a monument of the transition

from window to picture which ended in Dutch pictures of the cattle without either shepherds or Christ,—but still, the best men could do of the day; and the plain final woodwork of the stalls represented still the last art of living England in the form of honest and comfortable carpentry.

219. In this choir, written so closely and consecutively with indisputable British history, met every morning a congregation representing the best of what Britain had become,—orderly, as the crew of a man-of-war, in the goodly ship of their temple. Every man in his place, according to his rank, age, and learning; every man of sense or heart there recognizing that he was either fulfilling, or being prepared to fulfil, the gravest duties required of Englishmen. A well-educated foreigner, admitted to that morning service, might have learned and judged more quickly and justly what the country had been, and still had power to be, than by months of stay in court or city. There, in his stall, sat the greatest divine of England,—under his commandant niche, her greatest scholar,—among the tutors the present Dean Liddell, and a

man of curious intellectual power and simple virtue, Osborne Gordon. The group of noblemen gave, in the Marquis of Kildare, Earl of Desart, Earl of Emlyn, and Francis Charteris, now Lord Wemyss,—the brightest types of high race and active power. Henry Acland and Charles Newton among the senior undergraduates, and I among the freshmen, showed, if one had known it, elements of curious possibilities in coming days. None of us then conscious of any need or chance of change, least of all the stern captain, who, with rounded brow and glittering dark eye, led in his old thunderous Latin the responses of the morning prayer.

For all that I saw, and was made to think, in that cathedral choir, I am most thankful to this day.

220. The influence on me of the next goodliest part of the college buildings,—the hall,—was of a different and curiously mixed character. Had it only been used, as it only ought to have been, for festivity and magnificence,—for the refectory daily, the reception of guests, the delivery of speeches on state occasions, and the like,—the hall, like the

cathedral, would have had an entirely salutary and beneficently solemnizing effect on me, hallowing to me my daily bread, or, if our Dean Abbot had condescended sometimes to dine with us, our incidental venison. But with the extremely bad taste (which, to my mind, is our cardinal modern sin, the staple to the hinge of our taste for money, and distaste for money's worth, and every other worthiness)—in that bad taste, I say, the Abbot allowed our Hall to be used for 'collections.' The word is wholly abominable to my mind, whether as expressing extorted charities in church, or extracted knowledge in examination. 'Collections,' in scholastic sense, meant the college examination at the end of every term, at which the Abbot had always the worse than bad taste to be present as our inquisitor, though he had never once presided at our table as our host. Of course the collective quantity of Greek possessed by all the undergraduate heads in hall, was to *him*, infinitesimal. Scornful, at once, and vindictive, thunderous always, more sullen and threatening as the day went on, he stalked with baleful emanation of Gorgonian cold

from dais to door, and door to dais, of the majestic torture chamber,—vast as the great council hall of Venice, but degraded now by the mean terrors, swallow-like under its eaves, of doleful creatures who had no counsel in them, except how to hide their crib in time, at each fateful Abbot's transit. Of course *I* never used a crib, but I believe the Dean would rather I had used fifty, than borne the puzzled and hopeless aspect which I presented towards the afternoon, over whatever I had to do. And as my Latin writing was, I suppose, the worst in the university,—as I never by any chance knew a first from a second future, or, even to the end of my Oxford career, could get into my head where the Pelasgi lived, or where the Heraclidæ returned from,—it may be imagined with what sort of countenance the Dean gave me his first and second fingers to shake at our parting, or with what comfort I met the inquiries of my father and mother as to the extent to which I was, in college opinion, carrying all before me.

221. As time went on, the aspect of my college hall to me meant little more than the

fear and shame of those examination days; but even in the first surprise and sublimity of finding myself dining there, were many reasons for the qualification of my pleasure. The change from our front parlour at Herne Hill, some fifteen feet by eighteen, and meat and pudding with my mother and Mary, to a hall about as big as the nave of Canterbury Cathedral, with its extremity lost in mist, its roof in darkness, and its company, an innumerable, immeasurable vision in vanishing perspective, was in itself more appalling to me than appetizing; but also, from first to last, I had the clownish feeling of having no business there.

In the cathedral, however born or bred, I felt myself present by as good a right as its bishop,—nay, that in some of its lessons and uses, the building was less his than mine. But at table, with this learned and lordly perspective of guests, and state of worldly service, I had nothing to do; my own proper style of dining was for ever, I felt, divided from this—impassably. With baked potatoes under the mutton, just out of the oven, into the little parlour off the shop in Market Street, or

beside a gipsy's kettle on Addington Hill (not that I had ever been beside a gipsy's kettle, but often wanted to be); or with an oat-cake and butter—for I was always a gourmand—in a Scotch shepherd's cottage, to be divided with his collie, I was myself, and in my place: but at the gentlemen-commoners' table, in Cardinal Wolsey's dining-room, I was, in all sorts of ways at once, less than myself, and in all sorts of wrong places at once, out of my place.

222. I may as well here record a somewhat comic incident, extremely trivial, which took place a little while afterwards; and which, in spite of its triviality, farther contributed to diminish in my own mind the charm of Christ Church hall. I had been received as a good-humoured and inoffensive little cur, contemptuously, yet kindly, among the dogs of race at the gentlemen-commoners' table; and my tutor, and the men who read in class with me, were beginning to recognize that I had some little gift in reading with good accent, thinking of what I read, and even asking troublesome questions about it, to the extent of being one day eagerly and

admiringly congratulated by the whole class the moment we got out into quad, on the consummate manner in which I had floored our tutor. I having had no more intention to floor, or consciousness of flooring, the tutor, than a babe unborn! but had only happened, to the exquisite joy of my companions, to ask him something which he didn't happen to know. But, a good while before attaining this degree of public approval, I had made a direct attempt to bring myself into favourable notice, which had been far less successful.

It was an institution of the college that every week the undergraduates should write an essay on a philosophical subject, explicatory of some brief Latin text of Horace, Juvenal, or other accredited and pithy writer; and, I suppose, as a sort of guarantee to the men that what they wrote was really looked at, the essay pronounced the best was read aloud in hall on Saturday afternoon, with enforced attendance of the other undergraduates. Here, at least, was something in which I felt that my little faculties had some scope, and both conscientiously, and with real interest in the task, I wrote my weekly essay with all

the sagacity and eloquence I possessed. And therefore, though much flattered, I was not surprised, when, a few weeks after coming up, my tutor announced to me, with a look of approval, that I was to read my essay in hall next Saturday.

223. Serenely, and on good grounds, confident in my powers of reading rightly, and with a decent gravity which I felt to be becoming on this my first occasion of public distinction, I read my essay, I have reason to believe, not ungracefully; and descended from the rostrum to receive—as I doubted not—the thanks of the gentlemen-commoners for this creditable presentment of the wisdom of that body. But poor Clara, after her first ball, receiving her cousin's compliments in the cloak-room, was less surprised than I by my welcome from my cousins of the long-table. Not in envy, truly, but in fiery disdain, varied in expression through every form and manner of English language, from the Olympian sarcasm of Charteris to the level-delivered volley of Grimston, they explained to me that I had committed grossest *lèse-majesté* against the order of gentlemen-commoners; that no

gentleman-commoner's essay ought even to contain more than twelve lines, with four words in each; and that even indulging to my folly, and conceit, and want of *savoir faire*, the impropriety of writing an essay with any meaning in it, like vulgar students,—the thoughtlessness and audacity of writing one that would take at least a quarter of an hour to read, and then reading it all, might for this once be forgiven to such a greenhorn, but that Coventry wasn't the word for the place I should be sent to if ever I did such a thing again. I am happy at least in remembering that I bore my fall from the clouds without much hurt, or even too ridiculous astonishment. I at once admitted the justice of these representations, yet do not remember that I modified the style of my future essays materially in consequence, neither do I remember what line of conduct I had proposed to myself in the event of again obtaining the privilege of edifying the Saturday's congregation. Perhaps my essays really diminished in value, or perhaps even the tutors had enough of them. All I know is, I was never asked to.

224. I ought to have noticed that the first introductions to the men at my table were

made easier by the chance of my having been shut up for two days of storm at the Hospice of the Grimsel, in 1835, with some thirty travellers from various countries, among whom a Christ Church gentleman-commoner, Mr. Strangways, had played chess with me, and been a little interested in the way I drew granite among the snow. He at once acknowledged me in Hall for a fellow-creature; and the rest of his set, finding they could get a good deal out of me in amusement without my knowing it, and that I did not take upon myself to reform their manners from any Evangelical, or otherwise impertinent, point of view, took me up kindly; so that, in a fortnight or so, I had fair choice of what companions I liked, out of the whole college.

Fortunately for me — beyond all words, fortunately—Henry Acland, by about a year and a half my senior, chose *me*; saw what helpless possibilities were in me, and took me affectionately in hand. His rooms, next the gate on the north side of Canterbury, were within fifty yards of mine, and became to me the only place where I was happy. He quietly showed me the manner of life of English youth

of good sense, good family, and enlarged education; we both of us already lived in elements far external to the college quadrangle. He told me of the plains of Troy; a year or two afterwards I showed him, on his marriage journey, the path up the Montanvert; and the friendship between us has never changed, but by deepening, to this day.

225. Of other friends, I had some sensible and many kind ones; an excellent college tutor; and later on, for a private one, the entirely right-minded and accomplished scholar already named, Osborne Gordon. At the corner of the great quadrangle lived Dr. Buckland, always ready to help me,—or, a greater favour still, to be helped by me, in diagram drawing for his lectures. My picture of the granite veins in Trewavas Head, with a cutter weathering the point in a squall, in the style of Copley Fielding, still, I believe, forms part of the resources of the geological department. Mr. Parker, then first founding the Architectural Society, and Charles Newton, already notable in his intense and curious way of looking into things, were there to sympathize with me, and to teach me more accurately

the study of architecture. Within eight miles were the pictures of Blenheim. In all ways, opportunities, and privileges, it was not conceivable that a youth of my age could have been placed more favourably — if only he had had the wit to know them, and the will to use them. Alas! there I stood—or tottered—partly irresolute, partly idiotic, in the midst of them: nothing that I can think of among men, or birds, or beasts, quite the image of me, except poor little Shepherdess Agnes's picture of the 'Duckling Astray.'

226. I count it is just a little to my credit that I was not ashamed, but pleased, that my mother came to Oxford with me to take such care of me as she could. Through all three years of residence, during term time, she had lodging in the High Street (first in Mr. Adams's pretty house of sixteenth century wood-work), and my father lived alone all through the week at Herne Hill, parting with wife and son at once for the son's sake. On the Saturday, he came down to us, and I went with him and my mother, in the old domestic way, to St. Peter's, for the Sunday morning service: otherwise, they never appeared with me in public, lest

my companions should laugh at me, or any one else ask malicious questions concerning vintner papa and his old-fashioned wife.

None of the men, through my whole college career, ever said one word in depreciation of either of them, or in sarcasm at my habitually spending my evenings with my mother. But once, when Adèle's elder sister came with her husband to see Oxford, and I mentioned, somewhat unnecessarily, at dinner, that she was the Countess Diane de Maison, they had no mercy on me for a month afterwards.

The reader will please also note that my mother did not come to Oxford because she could not part with me,—still less, because she distrusted me. She came simply that she might be at hand in case of accident or sudden illness. She had always been my physician as well as my nurse; on several occasions her timely watchfulness had saved me from the most serious danger; nor was her caution now, as will be seen, unjustified by the event. But for the first two years of my college life I caused her no anxiety; and my day was always happier because I could tell her at tea whatever had pleased or profited me in it.

227. The routine of day is perhaps worth telling. I never missed chapel; and in winter got an hour's reading before it. Breakfast at nine,—half-an-hour allowed for it to a second, for Captain Marryat with my roll and butter. College lectures till one. Lunch, with a little talk to anybody who cared to come in, or share their own commons with me. At two, Buckland or other professor's lecture. Walk till five, hall dinner, wine either given or accepted, and quiet chat over it with the reading men, or a frolic with those of my own table; but I always got round to the High Street to my mother's tea at seven, and amused myself till Tom * rang in, and I got with a run to Canterbury gate, and settled to a steady bit of final reading till ten. I can't make out more than six hours' real work in the day, but that was constantly and unflinchingly given.

228. My Herodotean history, at any rate, got well settled down into me, and remains a greatly precious possession to this day. Also

* I try to do without notes, but for the sake of any not English reader must explain that 'Tom' is the name of the great bell of Oxford, in Christ Church western tower.

my college tutor, Mr. Walter Brown, became somewhat loved by me, and with gentleness encouraged me into some small acquaintance with Greek verbs. My mathematics progressed well under another tutor whom I liked, Mr. Hill; the natural instinct in me for pure geometry being keen, and my grasp of it, as far as I had gone, thorough. At my 'little go' in the spring of '38, the diagrams of Euclid being given me, as was customary with the Euclid examination paper, I handed the book back to the examiner, saying scornfully, 'I don't want any figures, Sir.' 'You had better take them,' replied he, mildly; which I did, as he bid me; but I could then, and can still, dictate blindfold the demonstration of any problem, with any letters, at any of its points. I just scraped through, and no more, with my Latin writing, came creditably off with what else had to be done, and my tutor was satisfied with me,—not enough recognizing that the 'little go' had asked, and got out of me, pretty nearly all I had in me, or was ever likely to have in that kind.

229. It was extremely unfortunate for me that the two higher lecturers of the college,

Kynaston (afterwards Master of St. Paul's) in Greek, and Hussey, the censor, in I don't recollect what of disagreeable, were both to my own feeling repellent. They both despised me, as a home-boy, to begin with; Kynaston with justice, for I had not Greek enough to understand anything he said; and when good-naturedly one day, in order to bring out as best he might my supposed peculiar genius and acquirements, he put me on at the *Ορα δέ γ' εἴσω τριγλύφων, ὅποι κενὸν δέμας καθεῖναι*, of the Iphigenia in Tauris, and found, to his own and all the class's astonishment and disgust, that I did not know what a triglyph was,—never spoke to me with any patience again, until long afterwards at St. Paul's, where he received me, on an occasion of school ceremony, with affection and respect.

Hussey was, by all except the best men of the college, felt to be a censorious censor; and the manners of the college were unhappily such as to make any wise censor censorious. He had, by the judgment of heaven, a grim countenance; and was to me accordingly, from first to last, as a Christchurch Gorgon or Erinnys, whose passing

cast a shadow on the air as well as on the gravel.

I am amused, as I look back, in now perceiving what an æsthetic view I had of all my tutors and companions, — how consistently they took to me the aspect of pictures, and how I from the first declined giving any attention to those which were not well painted enough. My ideal of a tutor was founded on what Holbein or Durer had represented in Erasmus or Melanchthon, or, even more solemnly, on Titian's Magnificoes or Bonifazio's Bishops. No presences of that kind appeared either in Tom or Peckwater; and even Doctor Pusey (who also never spoke to me) was not in the least a picturesque or tremendous figure, but only a sickly and rather ill put together English clerical gentleman, who never looked one in the face, or appeared aware of the state of the weather.

230. My own tutor was a dark-eyed, animated, pleasant, but not in the least impressive person, who walked with an unconscious air of assumption, noticeable by us juniors not to his advantage. Kynaston was ludicrously like

a fat schoolboy. Hussey, grim and brown as I said, somewhat lank, incapable of jest, equally incapable of enthusiasm; for the rest, doing his duty thoroughly, and a most estimable member of the college and university,—but to me, a resident calamity far greater than I knew, whose malefic influence I recognize in memory only.

Finally, the Dean himself, though venerable to me, from the first, in his evident honesty, self-respect, and real power of a rough kind, was yet in his general aspect too much like the sign of the Red Pig which I afterwards saw set up in pudding raisins, with black currants for eyes, by an imaginative grocer in Chartres fair; and in the total bodily and ghostly presence of him was to me only a rotundly progressive terror, or sternly enthroned and niched Anathema.

There was one tutor, however, out of my sphere, who reached my ideal, but disappointed my hope, then,—as perhaps his own, since;—a man sorrowfully under the dominion of the Greek *ἀνάγκη*—the present Dean. He was, and is, one of the rarest types of nobly-presenced Englishmen, but I fancy it was his

adverse star that made him an Englishman at all—the prosaic and practical element in him having prevailed over the sensitive one. He was the only man in Oxford among the masters of my day who knew anything of art; and his keen saying of Turner, that he 'had got hold of a false ideal,' would have been infinitely helpful to me at that time, had he explained and enforced it. But I suppose he did not see enough in me to make him take trouble with me,—and, what was much more serious, he saw not enough in himself to take trouble, in that field, with himself.

231. There was a more humane and more living spirit, however, inhabitant of the north-west angle of the Cardinal's Square: and a great many of the mischances which were only harmful to me through my own folly may be justly held, and to the full, counterbalanced by that one piece of good fortune, of which I had the wit to take advantage. Dr. Buckland was a Canon of the Cathedral, and he, with his wife and family, were all sensible and good-natured, with originality enough in the sense of them to give sap and savour to the whole college.

Originality—passing slightly into grotesqueness, and a little diminishing their effective power. The Doctor had too much humour ever to follow far enough the dull side of a subject. Frank was too fond of his bear cub to give attention enough to the training of the cubbish element in himself; and a day scarcely passed without Mit's com-mit-ting herself in some manner disapproved by the statelier college demoiselles. But all were frank, kind, and clever, vital in the highest degree; to me, medicinal and saving.

Dr. Buckland was extremely like Sydney Smith in his staple of character; no rival with him in wit, but like him in humour, common sense, and benevolently cheerful doctrine of Divinity. At his breakfast-table I met the leading scientific men of the day, from Herschel downwards, and often intelligent and courteous foreigners,—with whom my stutter of French, refined by Adèle into some precision of accent, was sometimes useful. Every one was at ease and amused at that breakfast-table,—the menû and service of it usually in themselves interesting. I have always regretted a day of unlucky engagement on which I missed a

delicate toast of mice; and remembered, with delight, being waited upon one hot summer morning by two graceful and polite little Carolina lizards, who kept off the flies.

232. I have above noticed the farther and incalculable good it was to me that Acland took me up in my first and foolishest days; and with pretty irony and loving insight,—or, rather, sympathy with what was best, and blindness to what was worst in me,—gave me the good of seeing a noble young English life in its purity, sagacity, honour, reckless daring, and happy piety; its English pride shining prettily through all, like a girl's in her beauty. It is extremely interesting to me to contrast the Englishman's silently conscious pride in what he *is*, with the vexed restlessness and wretchedness of the Frenchman, in his thirst for 'gloire,' to be gained by agonized effort to become something he is *not*.

One day when the Cherwell was running deep over one of its most slippery weirs, question arising between Acland and me whether it were traversable, and I declaring it too positively to be impassable, Acland instantly took off boot and sock, and walked

over and back. He ran no risk but of a sound ducking, being, of course, a strong swimmer: and I suppose him wise enough not to have done it had there been real danger. But he would certainly have run the margin fine, and possessed in its quite highest, and in a certain sense, most laughable degree, the constitutional English serenity in danger, which, with the foolish of us, degenerates into delight in it, but with the wise, whether soldier or physician, is the basis of the most fortunate action and swiftest decision of deliberate skill. When, thirty years afterwards, Dr. Acland was wrecked in the steamer *Tyne*, off the coast of Dorset, the steamer having lain wedged on the rocks all night,—no one knew what rocks,—and the dawn breaking on half-a-mile of dangerous surf between the ship and shore,—the officers, in anxious debate, the crew, in confusion, the passengers, in hysterics or at prayers, were all astonished, and many scandalized, at the appearance of Dr. Acland from the saloon in punctilious morning dress, with the announcement that 'breakfast was ready.' To the impatient clamour of indignation with which his unsympathetic conduct

was greeted, he replied by pointing out that not a boat could go on shore, far less come out from it, in that state of the tide, and that in the meantime, as most of them were wet, all cold, and at the best must be dragged ashore through the surf, if not swim for their lives in it, they would be extremely prudent to begin the day, as usual, with breakfast. The hysterics ceased, the confusion calmed, what wits anybody had became available to them again, and not a life was ultimately lost.

233. In all this playful and proud heroism of his youth, Henry Acland delighted me as a leopard or a falcon would, without in the least affecting my own character by his example. I had been too often adjured and commanded to take care of myself, ever to think of following him over slippery weirs, or accompanying him in pilot boats through white-topped shoal water; but both in art and science he could pull me on, being years ahead of me, yet glad of my sympathy, for, till I came, he was literally alone in the university in caring for either. To Dr. Buckland, geology was only the pleasant occupation of his own

merry life. To Henry Acland physiology was an entrusted gospel of which he was the solitary and first preacher to the heathen; and already in his undergraduate's room in Canterbury he was designing—a few years later in his professional room in Tom quad, he was realizing,—the introduction of physiological study which has made the university what she has now become.

Indeed, the curious point in Acland's character was its early completeness. Already in these yet boyish days, his judgment was unerring, his aims determined, his powers developed; and had he not, as time went on, been bound to the routine of professional work, and satisfied in the serenity, not to say arrested by the interests, of a beautiful home life,——it is no use thinking or saying what he might have been; those who know him best are the most thankful that he is what he is.

234. Next to Acland, but with a many-feet-thick wall between, in my æsthetic choice of idols, which required primarily of man or woman that they should be comely, before I regarded any of their farther qualities, came

Francis Charteris. I have always held Charteris the most ideal Scotsman, and on the whole the grandest type of European Circassian race hitherto visible to me; and his subtle, effortless, inevitable, unmalicious sarcasm, and generally sufficient and available sense, gave a constantly natural, and therefore inoffensive, hauteur to his delicate beauty. He could do what he liked with anyone,—at least with anyone of good humour and sympathy; and when one day, the old sub-dean coming out of Canterbury gate at the instant Charteris was dismounting at it in forbidden pink, and Charteris turned serenely to him, as he took his foot out of the stirrup, to inform him that 'he had been out with the Dean's hounds,' the old man and the boy were both alike pleased.

Charteris never failed in anything, but never troubled himself about anything. Naturally of high ability and activity, he did all he chose with ease,—neither had falls in hunting, nor toil in reading, nor ambition nor anxiety in examination,—nor disgrace in recklessness of life. He was partly checked, it may be in some measure weakened, by hectic danger in

his constitution, possibly the real cause of his never having made his mark in after life.

235. The Earl of Desart, next to Charteris, interested me most of the men at my table. A youth of the same bright promise, and of kind disposition, he had less natural activity, and less—being Irish,—common sense, than the Scot; and the University made no attempt to give him more. It has been the pride of recent days to equalize the position, and disguise the distinction of noble and servitor. Perhaps it might have been wiser, instead of effacing the distinction, to reverse the manner of it. In those days the happy servitor's tenure of his college-room and revenue depended on his industry, while it was the privilege of the noble to support with lavish gifts the college, from which he expected no return, and to buy with sums equivalent to his dignity the privileges of rejecting alike its instruction and its control. It seems to me singular, and little suggestive of sagacity in the common English character, that it had never occurred to either an old dean, or a young duke, that possibly the Church of England and the House of Peers might hold

a different position in the country in years to come if the entrance examination had been made severer for the rich than the poor; and the nobility and good breeding of a student expected to be blazoned consistently by the shield on his seal, the tassel on his cap, the grace of his conduct, and the accuracy of his learning.

In the last respect, indeed, Eton and Harrow boys are for ever distinguished,—whether idle or industrious in after life,—from youth of general England; but how much of the best capacity of her noblesse is lost by her carelessness of their university training, she may soon have more serious cause to calculate than I am willing to foretell.

I have little to record of my admired Irish fellow-student than that he gave the supper at which my freshman's initiation into the body of gentlemen-commoners was to be duly and formally ratified. Curious glances were directed to me under the ordeal of the necessary toasts,—but it had not occurred to the hospitality of my entertainers that I probably knew as much about wine as they did. When we broke up at the small hours, I helped to

carry the son of the head of my college downstairs, and walked across Peckwater to my own rooms, deliberating, as I went, whether there was any immediately practicable trigonometric method of determining whether I was walking straight towards the lamp over the door.

236. From this time—that is to say, from about the third week after I came into residence—it began to be recognized that, muff or milksop though I might be, I could hold my own on occasion; and in next term, when I had to return civilities, that I gave good wine, and that of curious quality, without any bush; and saw with good-humour the fruit I had sent for from London thrown out of the window to the porter's children: farther, that I could take any quantity of jests, though I could not make one, and could be extremely interested in hearing conversation on topics I knew nothing about,—to that degree that Bob Grimston condescended to take me with him one day to a tavern across Magdalen Bridge, to hear him elucidate from the landlord some points of the horses entered for the Derby, an object only to be properly

accomplished by sitting with indifference on a corner of the kitchen table, and carrying on the dialogue with careful pauses, and more by winks than words.

The quieter men of the set were also some of them interested in my drawing; and one or two—Scott Murray, for instance, and Lord Kildare—were as punctual as I in chapel, and had some thoughts concerning college life and its issues, which they were glad to share with me. In this second year of residence, my position in college was thus alike pleasant, and satisfactorily to my parents, eminent: and I was received without demur into the Christ-Church society, which had its quiet club-room at the corner of Oriel Lane, looking across to the 'beautiful gate' of St. Mary's; and on whose books were entered the names of most of the good men belonging to the upper table and its set, who had passed through Christ Church for the last ten or twelve years.

237. Under these luxurious, and—in the world's sight—honourable, conditions, my mind gradually recovering its tranquillity and spring, and making some daily, though infinitesimal. progress towards the attainment of common

sense, I believe that I did harder and better work in my college reading than I can at all remember. It seems to me now as if I had known Thucydides, as I knew Homer (Pope's!), since I could spell; but the fact was, that for a youth who had so little Greek to bless himself with at seventeen, to know every syllable of his Thucydides at half past eighteen meant some steady sitting at it. The perfect honesty of the Greek soldier, his high breeding, his political insight, and the scorn of construction with which he knotted his meaning into a rhythmic strength that writhed and wrought every way at once, all interested me intensely in him as a writer; while his subject, the central tragedy of all the world, the suicide of Greece, was felt by me with a sympathy in which the best powers of my heart and brain were brought up to their fullest, for my years.

I open, and lay beside me as I write, the perfectly clean and well-preserved third volume of Arnold, over which I spent so much toil, and burnt with such sorrow; my close-written abstracts still dovetailed into its pages; and read with surprised gratitude the editor's

final sentence in the preface dated 'Fox How, Ambleside, January, 1835.'

"Not the wildest extravagance of atheistic wickedness in modern times can go further than the sophists of Greece went before them. Whatever audacity can dare, and subtlety contrive, to make the words 'good' and 'evil' change their meaning, has been already tried in the days of Plato, and by his eloquence, and wisdom, and faith unshaken, put to shame."

CHAPTER XII.

ROSLYN CHAPEL.

238. I MUST yet return, before closing the broken record of these first twenty years, to one or two scattered days in 1836, when things happened which led forward into phases of work to be given account of in next volume.

I cannot find the date of my father's buying his first Copley Fielding,—'Between King's House and Inveroran, Argyllshire.' It cost a tremendous sum, for *us*—forty-seven guineas; and the day it came home was a festa, and many a day after, in looking at it, and fancying the hills and the rain were real.

My father and I were in absolute sympathy about Copley Fielding, and I could find it in my heart now to wish I had lived at the Land's End, and never seen any art but Prout's and his. We were very much set up at making his acquaintance, and then very

happy in it: the modestest of presidents he was; the simplest of painters, without a vestige of romance, but the purest love of daily sunshine and the constant hills. Fancy him, while Stanfield and Harding and Roberts were grand-touring in Italy, and Sicily, and Stiria, and Bohemia, and Illyria, and the Alps, and the Pyrenees, and the Sierra Morena,—Fielding never crossing to Calais, but year after year returning to Saddleback and Ben Venue, or, less ambitious yet, to Sandgate and the Sussex Downs.

239. The drawings I made in 1835 were really interesting even to artists, and appeared promising enough to my father to justify him in promoting me from Mr. Runciman's tutelage to the higher privileges of art-instruction. Lessons from any of the members of the Water-Colour Society cost a guinea, and six were supposed to have efficiency for the production of an adequately skilled water-colour amateur. There was, of course, no question by what master they should be given; and I know not whether papa or I most enjoyed the six hours in Newman Street: my father's intense delight in Fielding's work

making it a real pleasure to the painter that he should stay chatting while I had my lesson. Nor was my father's talk (if he could be got to talk) unworthy any painter's attention, though he never put out his strength but in writing. I chance in good time on a letter from Northcote in 1830, showing how much value the old painter put on my father's judgment of a piece of literary work which remains classical to this day, and is indeed the best piece of existing criticism founded on the principles of Sir Joshua's school:

240. 'DEAR SIR,—I received your most kind and consoling letter, yet I was very sorry to find you had been so ill, but hope you have now recovered your health. The praise you are so good as to bestow on me and the Volume of Conversations gives me more pleasure than perhaps you apprehend, as the book was published against my consent, and, in its first appearance in the magazines, totally without my knowledge. I have done all in my power to prevent its coming before the public, because there are several hard and cruel opinions of persons that I would not

have them see in a printed book; besides that, Hazlitt, although a man of real abilities, yet had a desire to give pain to others, and has also frequently exaggerated that which I had said in confidence to him. However, I thank God that this book, which made me tremble at its coming before the world, is received with unexpected favour on to my part, and the approbation of a mind like yours give (*sic*—short for "cannot but give") me the greatest consolation I can receive, and sets my mind more at ease.

'Please to present my respectful compliments to Mrs. Ruskin, who I hope is well, and kind remembrances to your son.

'I remain always, dear Sir,

'Your most obliged friend *

'And very humble servant,

'JAMES NORTHCOTE.

'ARGYLL HOUSE,
'*October 13th*, 1830.
'To John J. Ruskin, Esq.'

* In memory of the quiet old man who thus honoured us with his friendship, and in most true sense of their value, I hope to reprint the parts of the Conversations which I think he would have wished to be preserved.

241. And thus the proposed six lessons in Newman Street ran on into perhaps eight or nine, during which Copley Fielding taught me to wash colour smoothly in successive tints, to shade cobalt through pink madder into yellow ochre for skies, to use a broken scraggy touch for the tops of mountains, to represent calm lakes by broad strips of shade with lines of light between them (usually at about the distance of the lines of this print), to produce dark clouds and rain with twelve or twenty successive washes, and to crumble burnt umber with a dry brush for foliage and foreground. With these instructions, I succeeded in copying a drawing which Fielding made before me, some twelve inches by nine, of Ben Venue and the Trosachs, with brown cows standing in Loch Achray, so much to my own satisfaction that I put my work up over my bedroom chimney-piece the last thing at night, and woke to its contemplation in the morning with a rapture, mixed of self-complacency and the sense of new faculty, in which I floated all that day, as in a newly-discovered and strongly buoyant species of air.

In a very little while, however, I found that

this great first step did not mean consistent progress at the same pace. I saw that my washes, however careful or multitudinous, did not in the end look as smooth as Fielding's, and that my crumblings of burnt umber became uninteresting after a certain number of repetitions.

With still greater discouragement, I perceived the Fielding processes to be inapplicable to the Alps. My scraggy touches did not to my satisfaction represent aiguilles, nor my ruled lines of shade, the Lake of Geneva. The water-colour drawing was abandoned, with a dim under-current of feeling that I had no gift for it,—and in truth I had none for colour arrangement,—and the pencil outline returned to with resolute energy.

242. I had never, up to this time, seen a Turner drawing, and scarcely know whether to lay to the score of dulness, or prudence, the tranquillity in which I copied the engravings of the Rogers vignettes, without so much as once asking where the originals were. The facts being that they lay at the bottom of an old drawer in Queen Anne Street, inaccessible to me as the bottom of the sea,—and that, if I had seen them, they would only have

destroyed my pleasure in the engravings,—my rest in these was at least fortunate: and the more I consider of this and other such forms of failure in what most people would call laudable curiosity, the more I am disposed to regard with thankfulness, and even respect, the habits which have remained with me during life, of always working resignedly at the thing under my hand till I could do it, and looking exclusively at the thing before my eyes till I could see it.

On the other hand, the Academy Turners were too far beyond all hope of imitation to disturb me, and the impressions they produced before 1836 were confused; many of them, like the Quilleboeuf, or the 'Keelmen heaving in coals,' being of little charm in colour; and the Fountain of Indolence, or Golden Bough, perhaps seeming to me already fantastic, beside the naturalism of Landseer, and the human interest and intelligible finish of Wilkie.

243. But in 1836 Turner exhibited three pictures, in which the characteristics of his later manner were developed with his best skill and enthusiasm: Juliet and her Nurse, Rome from Mount Aventine, and Mercury and

Argus. His freak in placing Juliet at Venice instead of Verona, and the mysteries of lamplight and rockets with which he had disguised Venice herself, gave occasion to an article in Blackwood's Magazine of sufficiently telling ribaldry, expressing, with some force, and extreme discourtesy, the feelings of the pupils of Sir George Beaumont at the appearance of these unaccredited views of Nature.

The review raised me to the height of 'black anger' in which I have remained pretty nearly ever since; and having by that time some confidence in my power of words, and—not merely judgment, but sincere *experience*—of the charm of Turner's work, I wrote an answer to Blackwood, of which I wish I could now find any fragment. But my father thought it right to ask Turner's leave for its publication; it was copied in my best hand, and sent to Queen Anne Street, and the old man returned kindly answer, as follows:—

'47, QUEEN ANN (*sic*) STREET WEST,
'*October 6th*, 1836.

'MY DEAR SIR,—I beg to thank you for your zeal, kindness, and the trouble you have

taken in my behalf, in regard of the criticism of Blackwood's Magazine for October, respecting my works; but I never move in these matters, they are of no import save mischief and the meal tub, which Maga fears for by my having invaded the flour tub.

'*P.S.*—If you wish to have the manuscript back, have the goodness to let me know. If not, with your sanction, I will send it on to the possessor of the picture of Juliet.'

I cannot give the signature of this letter, which has been cut off for some friend! In later years it used to be, to my father, 'Yours most truly,' and to me, 'Yours truly.'

The 'possessor of the picture' was Mr. Munro of Novar, who never spoke to me of the first chapter of 'Modern Painters' thus coming into his hands. Nor did I ever care to ask him about it; and still, for a year or two longer, I persevered in the study of Turner engravings only, and the use of Copley Fielding's method for such efforts at colour as I made on the vacation journeys during Oxford days.

244. We made three tours in those

summers, without crossing Channel. In 1837, to Yorkshire and the Lakes; in 1838, to Scotland; in 1839, to Cornwall.

On the journey of 1837, when I was eighteen, I felt, for the last time, the pure childish love of nature which Wordsworth so idly takes for an intimation of immortality. We went down by the North Road, as usual; and on the fourth day arrived at Catterick Bridge, where there is a clear pebble-bedded stream, and both west and east some rising of hills, foretelling the moorlands and dells of upland Yorkshire; and there the feeling came back to me—as it could never return more.

It is a feeling only possible to youth, for all care, regret, or knowledge of evil destroys it; and it requires also the full sensibility of nerve and blood, the conscious strength of heart, and hope; not but that I suppose the purity of youth may feel what is best of it even through sickness and the waiting for death; but only in thinking death itself God's sending.

245. In myself, it has always been quite exclusively confined to *wild*, that is to say, wholly natural places, and especially to scenery

animated by streams, or by the sea. The sense of the freedom, spontaneous, unpolluted power of nature was essential in it. I enjoyed a lawn, a garden, a daisied field, a quiet pond, as other children do; but by the side of Wandel, or on the downs of Sandgate, or by a Yorkshire stream under a cliff, I was different from other children, that ever I have noticed: but the feeling cannot be described by any of us that have it. Wordsworth's 'haunted me like a passion' is no description of it, for it is not *like*, but *is*, a passion; the point is to define how it *differs* from other passions,—what sort of human, pre-eminently human, feeling it is that loves a stone for a stone's sake, and a cloud for a cloud's. A monkey loves a monkey for a monkey's sake, and a nut for the kernel's, but not a stone for a stone's. I took stones for bread, but not certainly at the Devil's bidding.

I was different, be it once more said, from other children even of my own type, not so much in the actual nature of the feeling, but in the mixture of it. I had, in my little clay pitcher, vialfuls, as it were, of Wordsworth's reverence, Shelley's sensitiveness, Turner's

accuracy, all in one. A snowdrop was to me, as to Wordsworth, part of the Sermon on the mount; but I never should have written sonnets to the celandine, because it is of a coarse yellow, and imperfect form. With Shelley, I loved blue sky and blue eyes, but never in the least confused the heavens with my own poor little Psychidion. And the reverence and passion were alike kept in their places by the constructive Turnerian element; and I did not weary myself in wishing that a daisy could see the beauty of its shadow, but in trying to draw the shadow rightly, myself.

246. But so stubborn and chemically inalterable the laws of the prescription were, that now, looking back from 1886 to that brook shore of 1837, whence I could see the whole of my youth, I find myself in nothing whatsoever *changed*. Some of me is dead, more of me stronger. I have learned a few things, forgotten many; in the total of me, I am but the same youth, disappointed and rheumatic.

And in illustration of this stubbornness, not by stiffening of the wood with age, but in the

structure of the pith, let me insist a minute or two more on the curious joy I felt in 1837 in returning to the haunts of boyhood. No boy could possibly have been more excited than I was by seeing Italy and the Alps; neither boy nor man ever knew better the difference between a Cumberland cottage and Venetian palace, or a Cumberland stream and the Rhone:—my very knowledge of this difference will be found next year expressing itself in the first bit of promising literary work I ever did; but, after all the furious excitement and wild joy of the Continent, the coming back to a Yorkshire streamside felt like returning to heaven. We went on into well known Cumberland; my father took me up Scawfell and Helvellyn, with a clever Keswick guide, who knew mineralogy, Mr. Wright; and the summer passed beneficently and peacefully.

247. A little incident which happened, I fancy in the beginning of '38, shows that I had thus recovered some tranquillity and sense, and might at that time have been settled down to simple and healthy life, easily enough, had my parents seen the chance.

I forgot to say, when speaking of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Gray, that, when I was a child, my mother had another religious friend, who lived just at the top of Camberwell Grove, or between it and the White Gate,—Mrs. Withers; an extremely amiable and charitable person, with whom my mother organized, I imagine, such schemes of almsgiving as her own housekeeping prevented her seeing to herself. Mr. Withers was a coal-merchant, ultimately not a successful one. Of him I remember only a reddish and rather vacant face; of Mrs. Withers, no material aspect, only the above vague but certain facts; and that she was a familiar element in my mother's life, dying out of it however without much notice or miss, before I was old enough to get any clear notion of her.

In this spring of '38, however, the widowed Mr. Withers, having by that time retired to the rural districts in reduced circumstances, came up to town on some small vestige of carboniferous business, bringing his only daughter with him to show my mother;—who, for a wonder, asked her to stay with us, while her father visited his umquwhile

cuentage at the coal-wharves. Charlotte Withers was a fragile, fair, freckled, sensitive slip of a girl about sixteen; graceful in an unfinished and small wild-flower sort of a way, extremely intelligent, affectionate, wholly right-minded, and mild in piety. An altogether sweet and delicate creature of ordinary sort, not pretty, but quite pleasant to see, especially if her eyes were looking your way, and her mind with them.

248. We got to like each other in a mildly confidential way in the course of a week. We disputed on the relative dignities of music and painting; and I wrote an essay nine foolscap pages long, proposing the entire establishment of my own opinions, and the total discomfiture and overthrow of hers, according to my usual manner of paying court to my mistresses. Charlotte Withers, however, thought I did her great honour, and carried away the essay as if it had been a school prize.

And, as I said, if my father and mother had chosen to keep her a month longer, we should have fallen quite melodiously and quietly in love; and they might have given me an

excellently pleasant little wife, and set me up, geology and all, in the coal business, without any resistance or farther trouble on my part. I don't suppose the idea ever occurred to them; Charlotte was not the kind of person they proposed for me. So Charlotte went away at the week's end, when her father was ready for her. I walked with her to Camberwell Green, and we said good-bye, rather sorrowfully, at the corner of the New Road; and that possibility of meek happiness vanished for ever. A little while afterwards, her father 'negotiated' a marriage for her with a well-to-do Newcastle trader, whom she took because she was bid. He treated her pretty much as one of his coal sacks, and in a year or two she died.

249. Very dimly, and rather against my own will, the incident showed me what my mother had once or twice observed to me, to my immense indignation, that Adèle was not the only girl in the world; and my enjoyment of our tour in the Trosachs was not described in any more Byronian heroics; the tragedy also having been given up, because, when I had described a gondola, a bravo, the heroine

Bianca, and moonlight on the Grand Canal, I found I had not much more to say.

Scott's country took me at last well out of it all. It is of little use to the reader now to tell him that still at that date the shore of Loch Katrine, at the east extremity of the lake, was exactly as Scott had seen it, and described,

> 'Onward, amid the copse 'gan peep,
> A narrow inlet, still and deep.'

In literal and lovely truth, that was so:—by the side of the footpath (it was no more) which wound through the Trosachs, deep and calm under the blaeberry bushes, a dark winding clear-brown pool, not five feet wide at first, reflected the entangled moss of its margin, and arch of branches above, with scarcely a gleam of sky.

That inlet of Loch Katrine was in itself an extremely rare thing; I have never myself seen the like of it in lake shores. A winding recess of deep water, without any entering stream to account for it—possible only, I imagine, among rocks of the quite abnormal confusion of the Trosachs; and besides the natural sweetness and wonder of it, made

sacred by the most beautiful poem that Scotland ever sang by her stream sides. And all that the nineteenth century conceived of wise and right to do with this piece of mountain inheritance, was to thrust the nose of a steamer into it, plank its blaeberries over with a platform, and drive the populace headlong past it as fast as they can scuffle.

It had been well for me if I had climbed Ben Venue and Ben Ledi, hammer in hand, as Scawfell and Helvellyn. But I had given myself some literary work instead, to which I was farther urged by the sight of Roslyn and Melrose.

250. The idea had come into my head in the summer of '37, and, I imagine, rose immediately out of my sense of the contrast between the cottages of Westmoreland and those of Italy. Anyhow, the November number of Loudon's *Architectural Magazine* for 1837 opens with 'Introduction to the Poetry of Architecture; or, The Architecture of the Nations of Europe considered in its Association with Natural Scenery and National Character,' by Kataphusin. I could not have put in fewer, or more inclusive words, the

definition of what half my future life was to be spent in discoursing of; while the nom-de-plume I chose, 'According to Nature,' was equally expressive of the temper in which I was to discourse alike on that and every other subject. The adoption of a nom-de-plume at all, implied (as also the concealment of name on the first publication of 'Modern Painters') a sense of a power of judgment in myself, which it would not have been becoming in a youth of eighteen to claim. Had either my father or tutor then said to me, 'Write as it is becoming in a youth to write,—let the reader discover what you know, and be persuaded to what you judge,' I perhaps might not now have been ashamed of my youth's essays. Had they said to me more sternly, 'Hold your tongue till you need not ask the reader's condescension in listening to you,' I might perhaps have been satisfied with my work when it was mature.

As it is, these youthful essays, though deformed by assumption, and shallow in contents, are curiously right up to the points they reach; and already distinguished above most of the literature of the time, for the skill

of language which the public at once felt for a pleasant gift in me.

251. I have above said that had it not been for constant reading of the Bible, I might probably have taken Johnson for my model of English. To a useful extent I have always done so; in these first essays, partly because I could not help it, partly of set, and well set, purpose.

On our foreign journeys, it being of course desirable to keep the luggage as light as possible, my father had judged that four little volumes of Johnson—the Idler and the Rambler—did, under names wholly appropriate to the circumstances, contain more substantial literary nourishment than could be, from any other author, packed into so portable compass. And accordingly, in spare hours, and on wet days, the turns and returns of reiterated Rambler and iterated Idler fastened themselves in my ears and mind; nor was it possible for me, till long afterwards, to quit myself of Johnsonian symmetry and balance in sentences intended, either with swordsman's or paviour's blow, to cleave an enemy's crest, or drive down the oaken pile of a principle. I

never for an instant compared Johnson to Scott, Pope, Byron, or any of the really great writers whom I loved. But I at once and for ever recognized in him a man entirely sincere, and infallibly wise in the view and estimate he gave of the common questions, business, and ways of the world. I valued his sentences not primarily because they were symmetrical, but because they were just, and clear; it is a method of judgment rarely used by the average public, who ask from an author always, in the first place, arguments in favour of their own opinions, in elegant terms; and are just as ready with their applause for a sentence of Macaulay's, which may have no more sense in it than a blot pinched between doubled paper, as to reject one of Johnson's, telling against their own prejudice,—though its symmetry be as of thunder answering from two horizons.

252. I hold it more than happy that, during those continental journeys, in which the vivid excitement of the greater part of the day left me glad to give spare half-hours to the study of a thoughtful book, Johnson was the one author accessible to me. No other writer

could have secured me, as he did, against all chance of being misled by my own sanguine and metaphysical temperament. He taught me carefully to measure life, and distrust fortune; and he secured me, by his adamantine common-sense, for ever, from being caught in the cobwebs of German metaphysics, or sloughed in the English drainage of them.

I open, at this moment, the larger of the volumes of the Idler to which I owe so much. After turning over a few leaves, I chance on the closing sentence of No. 65, which transcribing, I may show the reader in sum what it taught me,—in words which, writing this account of myself, I conclusively obey.

'Of these learned men, let those who aspire to the same praise imitate the diligence, and avoid the scrupulosity. Let it be always remembered that life is short, that knowledge is endless, and that many doubts deserve not to be cleared. Let those whom nature and study have qualified to teach mankind, tell us what they have learned while they are yet able to tell it, and trust their reputation only to themselves.'

It is impossible for me now to know how far my own honest desire for truth, and compassionate sense of what is instantly helpful to creatures who are every instant perishing, might have brought me, in their own time, to think and judge as Johnson thought and measured,—even had I never learned of him. He at least set me in the straight path from the beginning, and, whatever time I might waste in vain pleasure, or weak effort, he saved me for ever from false thoughts and futile speculations.

253. Why, I know not, for Mr. Loudon was certainly not tired of me, the Kataphusin papers close abruptly, as if their business was at its natural end, without a word of allusion in any part of them, or apology for the want of allusion, to the higher forms of civil and religious architecture. I find, indeed, a casual indication of some ulterior purpose in a ponderous sentence of the paper on the Westmoreland cottage, announcing that it will be seen hereafter, when we leave the lowly valley for the torn ravine, and the grassy knoll for the ribbed precipice, that if the continental architects cannot adorn the pasture with the

humble roof, they can crest the crag with eternal battlements.' But this magnificent promise ends in nothing more tremendous than a 'chapter on chimneys,' illustrated, as I find this morning to my extreme surprise, by a fairly good drawing of the building which is now the principal feature in the view from my study window,—Coniston Hall.

On the whole, however, these papers, written at intervals during 1838, indicate a fairly progressive and rightly consolidated range of thought on these subjects, within the chrysalid torpor of me.

254. From the Trosachs we drove to Edinburgh: and, somewhere on the road near Linlithgow, my father, reading some letters got by that day's post, coolly announced to my mother and me that Mr. Domecq was going to bring his four daughters to England again, to finish their schooling at New Hall, near Chelmsford.

And I am unconscious of anything more in that journey, or of anything after it, until I found myself driving down to Chelmsford. My mother had no business of course to take *me* with her to pay a visit in a convent; but

I suppose felt it would be too cruel to leave me behind. The young ladies were allowed a chat with us in the parlour, and invited (with acceptance) to spend their vacations always at Herne Hill. And so began a second æra of that part of my life which is *not* 'worthy of memory,' but only of the 'Guarda e Passa.'

There was some solace during my autumnal studies in thinking that she was really in England, really over *there*,—I could see the sky over Chelmsford from my study window,—and that she was shut up in a convent and couldn't be seen by anybody, or spoken to, but by nuns; and that perhaps she wouldn't quite like it, and would like to come to Herne Hill again, and bear with me a little.

255. I wonder mightily now what sort of a creature I should have turned out, if at this time Love had been with me instead of against me; and instead of the distracting and useless pain, I had had the joy of approved love, and, the untellable, incalculable motive of its sympathy and praise.

It seems to me such things are not allowed in this world. The men capable of the

highest imaginative passion are always tossed on fiery waves by it: the men who find it smooth water, and not scalding, are of another sort. My father's second clerk, Mr. Ritchie, wrote unfeelingly to his colleague, bachelor Henry, who would not marry for his mother's and sister's sakes, "If you want to know what happiness is, get a wife, and half a dozen children, and come to Margate." But Mr. Ritchie remained all his life nothing more than a portly gentleman with gooseberry eyes, of the Irvingite persuasion.

There must be great happiness in the love-matches of the typical English squire. Yet English squires make their happy lives only a portion for foxes.

256. Of course, when Adèle and her sisters came back at Christmas, and stayed with us four or five weeks, every feeling and folly that had been subdued or forgotten returned in redoubled force. I don't know what would have happened if Adèle had been a perfectly beautiful and amiable girl, and had herself in the least liked me. I suppose then my mother would have been overcome. But though extremely lovely at fifteen, Adèle was

not prettier than French girls in general at eighteen; she was firm, and fiery, and high principled; but, as the light traits already noticed of her enough show, not in the least amiable; and although she would have married me, had her father wished it, was always glad to have me out of her way. My love was much too high and fantastic to be diminished by her loss of beauty; but I perfectly well saw and admitted it, having never at any time been in the slightest degree blinded by love, as I perceive other men are, out of my critic nature. And day followed on day, and month to month, of complex absurdity, pain, error, wasted affection, and rewardless semi-virtue, which I am content to sweep out of the way of what better things I can recollect at this time, into the smallest possible size of dust heap, and wish the Dustman Oblivion good clearance of them.

With this one general note, concerning children's conduct to their parents, that a great quantity of external and irksome obedience may be shown them, which virtually is no obedience, because it is not cheerful and total. The *wish* to disobey is already

disobedience; and although at this time I was really doing a great many things I did not like, to please my parents, I have not now *one* self-approving thought or consolation in having done so, so much did its sullenness and maimedness pollute the meagre sacrifice.

257. But, before I quit, for this time, the field of romance, let me write the epitaph of one of its sweet shadows, which some who knew the shadow may be glad I should write. The ground floor, under my father's counting-house at Billiter Street, I have already said was occupied by Messrs. Wardell & Co. The head of this firm was an extremely intelligent and refined elderly gentleman, darkish, with spiritedly curling and projecting dark hair, and bright eyes; good-natured and amiable in a high degree, well educated, not over wise, always well pleased with himself, happy in a sensible wife, and a very beautiful, and entirely gentle and good, only daughter. Not over wise, I repeat, but an excellent man of business; older, and, I suppose, already considerably richer, than my father. He had a handsome house at Hampstead, and spared no pains on his daughter's education.

It must have been some time about this year 1839, or the previous one, that my father having been deploring to Mr. Wardell the discomfortable state of mind I had got into about Adèle, Mr. Wardell proposed to him to try whether some slight diversion of my thoughts might not be effected by a visit to Hampstead. My father's fancy was still set on Lady Clara Vere de Vere; but Miss Wardell was everything that a girl should be, and an heiress,—of perhaps something more than my own fortune was likely to come to. And the two fathers agreed that nothing could be more fit, rational, and desirable, than such an arrangement. So I was sent to pass a summer afternoon, and dine at Hampstead.

258. It would have been an extremely delightful afternoon for any youth not a simpleton. Miss Wardell had often enough heard me spoken of by her father as a well-conducted youth, already of some literary reputation—author of the 'Poetry of Architecture'—winner of the Newdigate,—First class man in expectation. She herself had been brought up in a way closely resembling my own, in severe seclusion by devoted parents,

at a suburban villa with a pretty garden, to skip, and gather flowers, in. The chief difference was that, from the first, Miss Wardell had had excellent masters, and was now an extremely accomplished, intelligent, and faultless maid of seventeen; fragile and delicate to a degree enhancing her beauty with some solemnity of fear, yet in perfect health, as far as a fast-growing girl could be; a softly moulded slender brunette, with her father's dark curling hair transfigured into playful grace round the pretty, modest, not unthoughtful, gray-eyed face. Of the afternoon at Hampstead, I remember only that it was a fine day, and that we walked in the garden; mamma, as her mere duty to me in politeness at a first visit, superintending,—it would have been wiser to have left us to get on how we could. I very heartily and reverently admired the pretty creature, and would fain have done, or said, anything I could to please her. Literally to *please* her, for that is, indeed, my hope with all girls, in spite of what I have above related of my mistaken ways of recommending myself. My primary thought is how to serve *them*, and make them happy, and if they could use

me for a plank bridge over a stream, or set me up for a post to tie a swing to, or anything of the sort not requiring me to talk, I should be always quite happy in such promotion. This sincere devotion to them, with intense delight in whatever beauty or grace they chance to have, and in most cases, perceptive sympathy, heightened by faith in their right feelings, for the most part gives me considerable power with girls: but all this prevents me from ever being in the least at ease with them,—and I have no doubt that during the whole afternoon at Hampstead, I gave little pleasure to my companion. For the rest, though I extremely admired Miss Wardell, she was not my sort of beauty. I like oval faces, crystalline blonde, with straightish, at the utmost wavy, (or, in length, wreathed) hair, and the form elastic, and foot firm. Miss Wardell's dark and tender grace had no power over me, except to make me extremely afraid of being tiresome to her. On the whole, I suppose I came off pretty well, for she afterwards allowed herself to be brought out to Herne Hill to see the pictures, and so on; and I recollect her looking a little

frightenedly pleased at my kneeling down to hold a book for her, or some such matter.

259. After this second interview, however, my father and mother asking me seriously what I thought of her, and explaining to them that though I saw all her beauty, and merit, and niceness, she yet was not my sort of girl,—the negotiations went no farther at that time, and a little while after, were ended for all time; for at Hampstead they went on teaching the tender creature High German, and French of Paris, and Kant's Metaphysics, and Newton's Principia; and then they took her to Paris, and tired her out with seeing everything every day, all day long, besides the dazzle and excitement of such a first outing from Hampstead; and she at last getting too pale and weak, they brought her back to some English seaside place, I forget where: and there she fell into nervous fever and faded away, with the light of death flickering clearer and clearer in her soft eyes, and never skipped in Hampstead garden more.

How the parents, especially the father, lived on, I never could understand: but I suppose they were honestly religious without

talking of it, and they had nothing to blame themselves in, except not having known better. The father, though with grave lines altering his face for ever, went steadily on with his business, and lived to be old.

260. I cannot be sure of the date of either Miss Withers' or Miss Wardell's death; that of Sybilla Dowie (told in Fors), more sad than either, was much later; but the loss of her sweet spirit, following her lover's, had been felt by us before the time of which I am now writing. I had never myself seen Death, nor had any part in the grief or anxiety of a sick chamber; nor had I ever seen, far less conceived, the misery of unaided poverty. But I had been made to think of it; and in the deaths of the creatures whom I had seen joyful, the sense of deep pity, not sorrow for myself, but for them, began to mingle with all the thoughts, which, founded on the Homeric, Æschylean, and Shakespearian tragedy, had now begun to modify the untried faith of childhood. The blue of the mountains became deep to me with the purple of mourning, —the clouds that gather round the setting sun, not subdued, but raised in awe as the

harmonies of a Miserere,—and all the strength and framework of my mind, lurid, like the vaults of Roslyn, when weird fire gleamed on its pillars, foliage-bound, and far in the depth of twilight, 'blazed every rose-carved buttress fair.'

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